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Thesis

THE MEXICAN IMMIGRANT, A PRODUCT OF HIS BACKGROUND

Submitted by

Mary Kelly Quinn

(A.B., Wellesley, 1922)

In partial fulfillment of requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts

1930

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Chapter	
Foreword . . . . .	
Outline of the Thesis. . . . .	1
The Thesis . . . . .	1
I. Types of Mexicans entering the United States .	1
II. The First Generation within this country . . .	15
III. The Second Generation - The American born Mexican turns away from the ways of Mexico toward those of the United States . . . . .	45
Comprehensive Summary . . . . .	59
Bibliography . . . . .	64





## THE MEXICAN IMMIGRANT, A PRODUCT OF HIS BACKGROUND

### Introduction

This paper does not intend to offer a solution of the Mexican question nor to discuss the advisability of imposing a quota to limit the number of Mexicans entering the United States, but rather to explain those already here. We shall attempt to see the Mexican in the light of his heritage, to understand his problems in this land of his adoption and through his children to anticipate the future.

No claim is made to presentation of the only explanation or interpretation of the Mexican's actions and mode of thought as I am fully aware of the truth of the statement that "there is a wider difference of opinion concerning the habits, customs, nature, disposition and ability of the natives of Mexico and their descendants than there is concerning any other people, individual, or thing in existence, not even excepting the curing of colds or the merits of the Eighteenth Amendment."<sup>1</sup>

If at times my view seems personal and not at all academic, please remember, I have lived all my life on the Mexican border in a town whose population is more than half

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1. Thomson: Mexicans, an Interpretation, National Conference of Social Work, 1928, p. 499.





Mexican. I went to school with Mexicans from the kindergarten through the high school. I have taught Mexican students in high school and in college. I have been used to Mexican servants from my babyhood through my own housekeeping attempts. Among my Mexican friends are members of the old families who hold their land on the American side of the Rio Grande by grant from the Spanish Kings, descendants of the Mexicans who fought for Texas independence, political refugees, Mexican ex-officials, members of exiled religious orders, upper class Mexicans and many peons, ambitious and unambitious. To me the Mexican is an individual and when I try to generalize about the race I can not, because I think of Juana who was my Mother's laundress before I was born and who washed for me last year while her daughter was my house maid; Inez, who for thirteen years was devotion itself to my Mother and her little children; Gabriel, a former Rurale, who dusts my office and inquires about my health, and so many more good Mexican friends. I think of the homes where I have been entertained in Mexico, of the friendliness and kindness of the natives, their polite efforts to understand my "kitchen Spanish". So if I fail to present truthfully the Mexican as a product of his background the fault is due to my background which makes it impossible for me "to see the woods because of the trees."



THE MEXICAN IMMIGRANT, A PRODUCT OF HIS BACKGROUND

Outline



## THE MEXICAN IMMIGRANT, A PRODUCT OF HIS BACKGROUND

### Outline

- Chapter I. Types of Mexican entering the United States
- a. Members coming for business reasons or generally to improve status.
  - b. Political refugees
  - c. Exiled Religious Orders
  - d. General survey of their life in Mexico
  - e. Number small, presents no problem
2. Lower class
- a. The laborer and his family
  - b. General survey of lower class life in Mexico
  - c. Number large raising discussion
- Chapter II. The first generation within the United States
- 1. Standard of living
    - a. Homes, in poor part of town and scantily furnished
    - b. Dress brought from Mexico and little modified
    - c. Morals, a matter of dispute but basically sound
    - d. Lazy? Not from Mexican point of view





e. Feeling for patron transferred from Mexico

f. Little attention to the future

2. Work

a. Men -- unskilled

b. Women -- household drudgery

c. Children do very little work for pay

d. Wages are low

3. Attitude toward education

a. Fine for children

b. Little appeal to adults

4. Political understanding

a. No revolution follows defeat!

b. Easily swayed by oratory

c. Votes sold freely

d. Ignorant of candidates and issues, but fond of voting

5. Slight value upon human life

a. Kill easily

b. General health neglected

c. High rate of infant mortality

(1) Ignorance in care

(2) "Some bound to die"

6. Recreation

a. Music, the Mexican's chief joy

b. Baille at private homes, only dancing done



## 7. Religion

- a. Deeply devout
- b. Informally mixed with life
- c. Extremely personal

## 8. Ties binding immigrant to Mexico

- a. Language, soft and beautiful while English is harsh and hard to learn
- b. Music, minor and very different from American music
- c. Folk-lore
  - (1) Stories of Aztec greatness
  - (2) Religious traditions
    - (a) Lady of Guadalupe
  - (3) Hero worship
    - (a) Hidalgo
    - (b) Juarez
- d. Memory of great beauty in Mexico
  - (1) Church and public buildings
  - (2) Natural beauty

## Chapter III. The second generation

## 1. Standard of living much improved

- a. Homes much improved
- b. Dress Americanized

## 2. Education

- a. Schools make a stronger appeal and the children stay longer





- b. Night schools hardly successful
- c. College for only the most ambitious
- d. Library made universal appeal

### 3. Work

- a. Men -- skilled laborers, professional men, musicians, artisans
- b. Women -- cooks, clerks, beauty shop operators, dressmakers
- c. Children work after school
- d. Wages -- higher, but still low

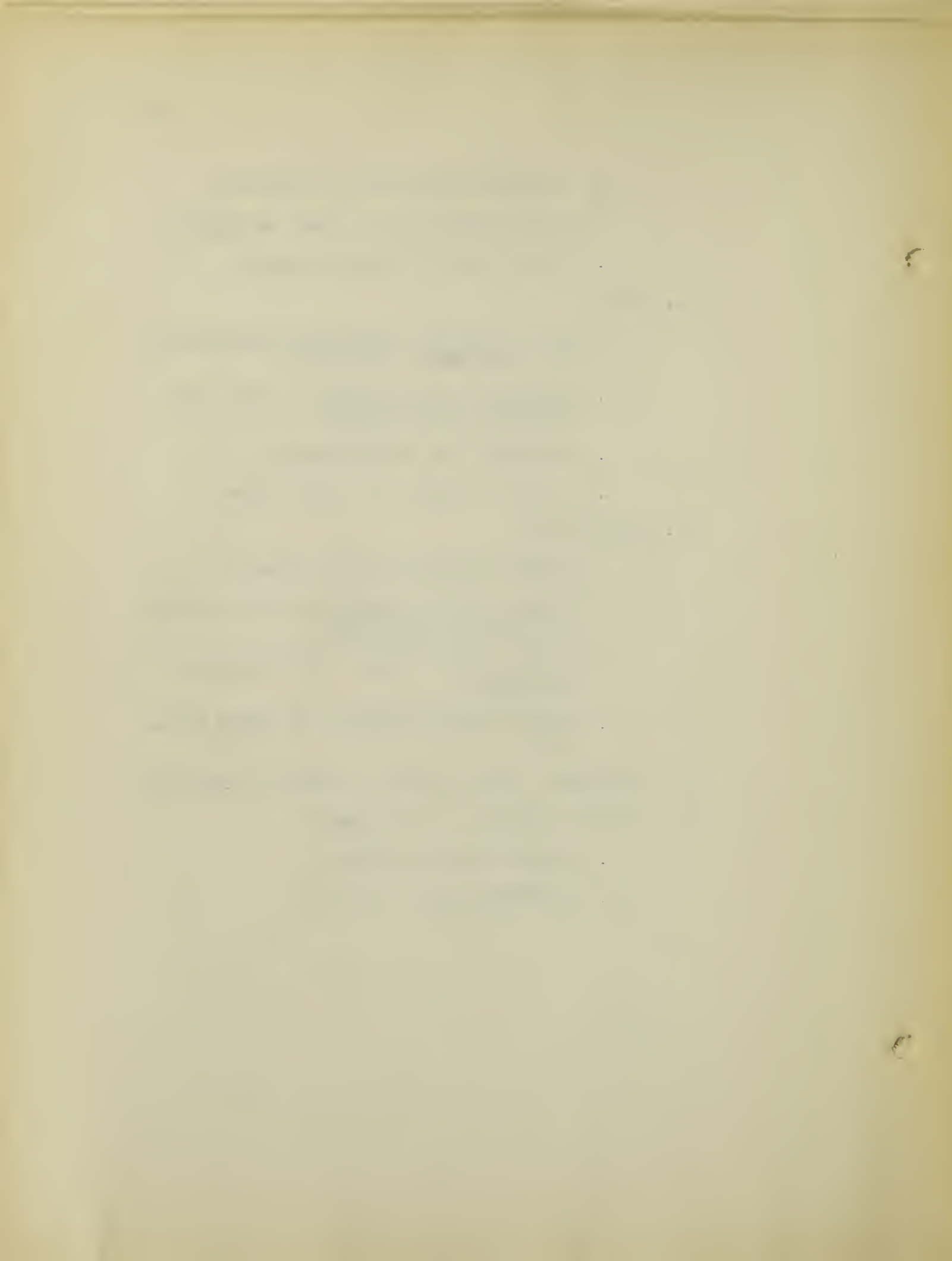
### 4. Recreation

- a. Movies the joy of all Mexicans
- b. Baille not so important as they begin to go to public dances
- c. Music, the greatest link between old and young
- d. Sports appeal strongly to these children

### 5. Religion, not as strong a force as formerly

### 6. Feeling between racial groups

- a. Mexican toward American
- b. American toward Mexican



THE MEXICAN IMMIGRANT, A PRODUCT OF HIS BACKGROUND

THE THESIS



## THE MEXICAN IMMIGRANT, A PRODUCT OF HIS BACKGROUND

### CHAPTER ONE

#### Types of Mexican Entering the United States

With the quota law effectively cutting down the influx of new comers from across the seas, we turn our attention to the peoples who are still allowed to enter without limit<sup>1</sup> upon numbers, the Latin Americans, Canadians and Mexicans. The Canadians as fair, English speaking persons are soon lost in the United States, the similarity of culture and appearance easily overcoming nationalistic feeling. With the Mexican it is different, his skin is darker than that of the average American, his speech is of Latin origin, his culture quite alien. He has neither the means nor the opportunity of losing himself in the aggregate of the United States with the result that he presents a problem both socially and economically.

Whatever may be one's personal feeling as to the advisability of curtailing further Mexican immigration, the

- 
1. Under the present law the Dominion of Canada, New Foundland, Republic of Mexico, Republic of Cuba, Republic of Haiti, Dominican Republic, Canal Zone and the independent countries of Central and South America have no quota limitation.





question of what to do about those already here is a vital one. The number of Mexicans in the United States is variously estimated, some claiming as many as 1,000,000 while others feel there are only about half that number.<sup>1</sup> In the Southwest the number is large enough for them to form a considerable proportion of the population, there being towns in Texas such as Ysleta and San Elizario which are more than 90% Mexican and other communities such as San Antonio and El Paso where the Mexicans form from one third to more than one half the group. According to the 1920 census five states had the bulk of the Mexican immigrants; Texas had 249,652; California had 86,610; Arizona had 60,325; New Mexico had 19,906; Colorado had 10,894. These figures would place 427,387 out of a possible 486,418 foreign born Mexicans in five states, all west of the Mississippi. This decided concentration of the newcomers tends to make their admission, amalgamation and assimilation almost a local question.

To go to the root of the matter, we must remember that Columbus sailed under the flag of Spain, all of his crew being Spaniards with three exceptions - one Irishman, one Englishman and an Israelite.<sup>2</sup> The first real foothold any European nation

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1. The United States Census showed the following numbers of foreign born Mexicans within the United States.

1870 - 42,435	1900 - 103,393
1880 - 68,399	1910 - 221,915
1890 - 77,853	1920 - 486,418

But the estimated number is much larger as in the ten years since the last census immigration from Mexico has been heavy and the number of illegal entries undoubtedly has been huge.

2. Schlesinger: New Viewpoints in American History, p. 2.



gained on this continent was in 1519 when Cortez betrayed the hospitality of Montezuma. If the noche triste had seen the destruction of the Spanish forces there would be no Mexican problem today, but Cortez rallied his men along the Tacuba Causeway and brought the Aztec Empire under the flag of Spain. That wealth greedy kingdom in its search for the fabled cities of gold extended its power until it included the greater part of our present west.

California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas were all under the direct control of the Spanish vice-roys with towns, missions and communication well established when the ancestors of our "native white stock" first saw Virginia and the famous "rock bound coast." These Western sections continued under Spanish and Mexican government until less than a century ago when suddenly the erstwhile foreigner became the citizen and the people who for centuries had inhabited the land were looked upon as foreigners because of their speech and customs. We are too prone to think of the fairer race as always the host and the darker race as the alien, forgetful of the welcome first Spain and later Mexico gave to Colonists. We are too prone to forget the debt we owe the Mexicans in the making of the Southwest and remember only the conflicts between the two races. We forget Zavala, Viesca and Seguin and remember Santa Anna, forget that there were Mexicans with Travis in the Alamo and with Houston at San Jacinto. This historical unfairness as well as the legal turning of the tables has generally increased the distrust and jealousy between the







racess within the United States and further complicates the Mexican immigration question.

In estimating the influence of the Mexicans' background we must not overlook the vital change in race which took place with the Spanish Conquest. "It is one of the tragedies of history that the Aztec, the Toltec, the Maya, the Inca Amerind civilizations were destroyed. Apparently, the intellectual castes of these civilizations were those of the warrior, the priest. These proud men resisted the Spanish to the death. Against his firearms they opposed the weapons of an obsidian culture and were annihilated. It was only the peon slaves, attached to soil owned by the priestly and warrior castes, which persisted!"<sup>1</sup> Spain's policy of sending men to the colonies resulted in the mixing of Spanish and Indian blood so that today Mexico's 10,000,000 population is 43% mixed stock (Spanish, Indian and Negro), 19% white (Spanish) and 38% native Indian.<sup>2</sup>

Some upper class Mexicans and Spaniards, natives of Mexico, come to this country every year to engage in business for themselves, to represent Mexican firms and to generally improve their economic condition. A few come to educate their children, but as a rule the upper class

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1. Goethe: Danger of Unrestricted Mexican Immigration in Current History, Vol. 28, p, 767.

2. Bogardus: Essentials of Americanization, p. 265.

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IN THE FIELD OF

THE HISTORY OF

THE UNITED STATES

OF AMERICA

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Mexicans send their children to the better boarding schools, military institutions and convents here and in Europe. Usually the men continue and complete their college or University training while the girls return home after finishing their secondary schooling. These Mexican girls who have tasted American freedom of even the boarding school type show great devotion to their parents in the docile way they again return to Mexican customs, the everpresent duennia, the extreme modesty of the Latin woman and so on.

Since the driving out of the Spanish in 1821 Mexico has had very few decades of peace and each of these disturbances has brought about a corresponding group of political outcasts many of whom have crossed the border and taken up residence in the United States. Even the relatively peaceful years of Diaz's rule had cases of political refugees. Since the beginning of this last revolution<sup>1</sup> in 1911 a flood of upper class Mexicans has come to this country with each change in government. At first these people were the members of the upper class of the Diaz regime and they came bringing with them, servants, horses, carriages and lovely household goods. Since then the worldly goods of the political refugees have decreased; the looting of revolutionary armies, the

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1. Moises Saenz speaks of the period from 1911 to the present as one revolution, altho we are apt to see in it a succession of struggles, his interpretation is convenient at this point.





fluctuation of currency and the general hard times which have existed thru nearly twenty years of civil strife have destroyed the material possessions of Mexico. As a rule today they slip in almost unnoticed and set about gradually adapting themselves to the new conditions.

After Calles began the enforcement of the Reform Laws which led to the departure of the Religious Orders and the final closing of the Catholic churches in August 1926, hundreds of religious refugees poured into the United States. Many of them came almost penniless; their chief source of income had been the lands the orders held and their schools. The priests and monks, not speaking English, could find little parish work and were usually cared for by the local priests who gave them homes in the rectories and let them help with the parts of the church services where no knowledge of any

language other than Latin was needed. The nuns faced a greater difficulty. The Mexican women are very devout and a great many women of the upper class enter convents, usually the cloistered orders where they devote their time to prayer, meditation and the making of exquisite altar linens. When these women enter the order they make a payment of a sum sufficient to support them for life, thus removing the need of remunerative work and freeing them for the contemplative life. All of these orders likewise admit lay sisters, that is women with no education or refinement who make no money payment, never take final vows and do the actual work of the

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convent such as the cooking and cleaning.

When these sisters had to leave Mexico their property was gone, the endowments were confiscated and they were faced with the necessity of making a living in a new land with a different language, a land where even the teaching orders could not find pupils and certainly a land that is not adapted to the contemplative life. The ingenuity with which these women of gentle birth met their necessity will always be to the credit of the Mexican woman.

They rented whatever type of house was available, fitted out their own chapel and started to make a living. One of the cloistered orders<sup>1</sup> opened a small bakery in the kitchen of the convent where the Mexican colony and the Americans who were fortunate enough to know of its existence bought delicious pan dulce, "pastellitas" and tamales from a soft voiced nun speaking careful English, and who, standing behind the cloister grill dressed in her creamy white robe with the crimson cross looked like a person from the Middle Ages. This same order used their dexterity with the needle to advantage, they marked linens, made baby clothes, made colony lace and did the other things that modern America needs from fine needle women.

The non-cloistered orders found it easier to adjust themselves, they were used to meeting the world thru their schools and orphanages. Some of these nuns opened small

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1. In El Paso, Texas.

# THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

The history of the United States is a story of growth and change. From the first settlers to the present day, the nation has evolved through various stages of development. The early years were marked by exploration and settlement, followed by a period of rapid expansion and industrialization. The American Revolution and the Civil War were pivotal moments in the nation's history, shaping its identity and values.

The United States has a rich and diverse cultural heritage. The contributions of immigrants from various parts of the world have shaped the nation's identity. The American dream, the pursuit of happiness, and the principles of liberty and justice are central to the nation's history. The country has also been a leader in the fields of science, technology, and the arts.

The history of the United States is a story of resilience and perseverance. The nation has overcome many challenges, from natural disasters to social and economic crises. The American people have shown a remarkable ability to adapt and overcome, maintaining the core values that define the nation. The history of the United States is a testament to the power of the human spirit.

The United States has a long and proud tradition of democracy. The principles of self-government and the rule of law are the foundation of the nation's political system. The American people have played a central role in the nation's history, shaping its destiny through their actions and decisions. The history of the United States is a story of the people and the values they have created.

The United States is a nation of many faces. The diversity of its people and cultures is one of its greatest strengths. The history of the United States is a story of the many different voices that have shaped the nation. The American people have created a unique and vibrant society, one that is a source of pride and inspiration for all.

The history of the United States is a story of hope and possibility. The American dream is a vision of a better life, one that is within reach for all. The history of the United States is a testament to the power of the human spirit to create a better world. The American people have shown a remarkable ability to dream and to achieve, and they continue to do so today.

schools for the children of refugees, some took charge of Mexican orphanages, others opened day nurseries for the children of working Mexican mothers.

Following the closing of the churches some laymen left Mexico because they did not care to live in a country under a religious cloud while others were forced to leave because of their participation in the intrigues of the church party. These latter might be classed as political refugees, as Mexico has never been able to keep her politics and religion separate, to the discredit of both. The agreement arrived at last summer between the church and the government will not bring about the immediate return of the religious orders as it prohibits religious teaching and community life so they will continue to constitute a part of our Mexican population.

Since the Conquest Mexico has had only two classes socially, the rich (composing less than 10% of the population) and the peons.<sup>1</sup> Under Diaz the wealthy lived lives of elegance, culture and beauty, their time divided between palatial town houses and haciendas containing thousands of acres. In 1910 the Terrazas estate in the State of Chihuahua contained thirteen million acres.

The hacienda was a feudal estate with the owner's house, his chapel, the necessary farm buildings, adobe quarters or huts for the peons. And then there were the acres and acres

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1. Bogardus: Essentials of Americanization, p. 265.





of land, too great an abundance of farmland for cultivation or else endless stretches of grazing land.

The town houses were built close to the street, around patios where the family life centered, their furniture and decorations following closely the fashions set by Maximilian and his hapless Empress. Here the Mexican family still lives a slow moving life of leisure. Their social life is active and varied but there is always time for the evening drive; always the same, endless times up and down the main thoroughfare. In the city of Mexico between five and seven the imported cars of the wealthy pass in a slow moving stream up and down Francisco Madero and the Paseo, all fashionable Mexico City being represented. This custom is followed in the lesser cities also, even Chihuahua which is almost a ruin since the days of Villa still has her promenade.

We wonder how the Mexican business and professional man ever accomplishes anything with his breakfast between nine thirty and ten, his leisurely visiting before office hours, his siesta, to say nothing of the numerous holidays. When he and his family bring their sense of leisure to our time ridden country is there any wonder that we fail to understand them or they to understand us?

The members of this upper class group, if they stay on the border settle in Los Angeles, El Paso or San Antonio where there are already colonies of their own class. Usually they live near each other, have their own churches, their





own charitable and social organizations, engage in the professions chiefly among their own people, send their children to the local public and private schools and take part in the community activities of the city. These are people of breeding and education, the men are distinguished looking, the women under thirty are beautiful with fair skins and dark eyes, the women over thirty placidly reconciled to increasing years and flesh. Those with more money and less hope of returning to Mexico have often joined friends in Eastern cities. Altho their number has become much larger since the crumbling of the Diaz government in 1911, nowhere do they constitute a problem.

The native Indians, altho rapidly increasing in Mexico, seldom leave their native land<sup>1</sup> so the mass of the immigrants come from the mixed race and the peon class. The Mexican peon lacks the grace and culture of the Spaniard, the vigor and ingenuity of the Indian; he is a product of the mixture of conquering with conquered blood and four hundred years of squalor.

In the Diaz scheme of Mexican life the peon was the servant, doing personal service, working in the mines, but the vast majority of them were in the country working the fields of the haciendas or tending the cattle on the ranches. The rural peon lived in an adobe house supplied him and his family, attended the patron's chapel, subsisted chiefly upon frijoles,

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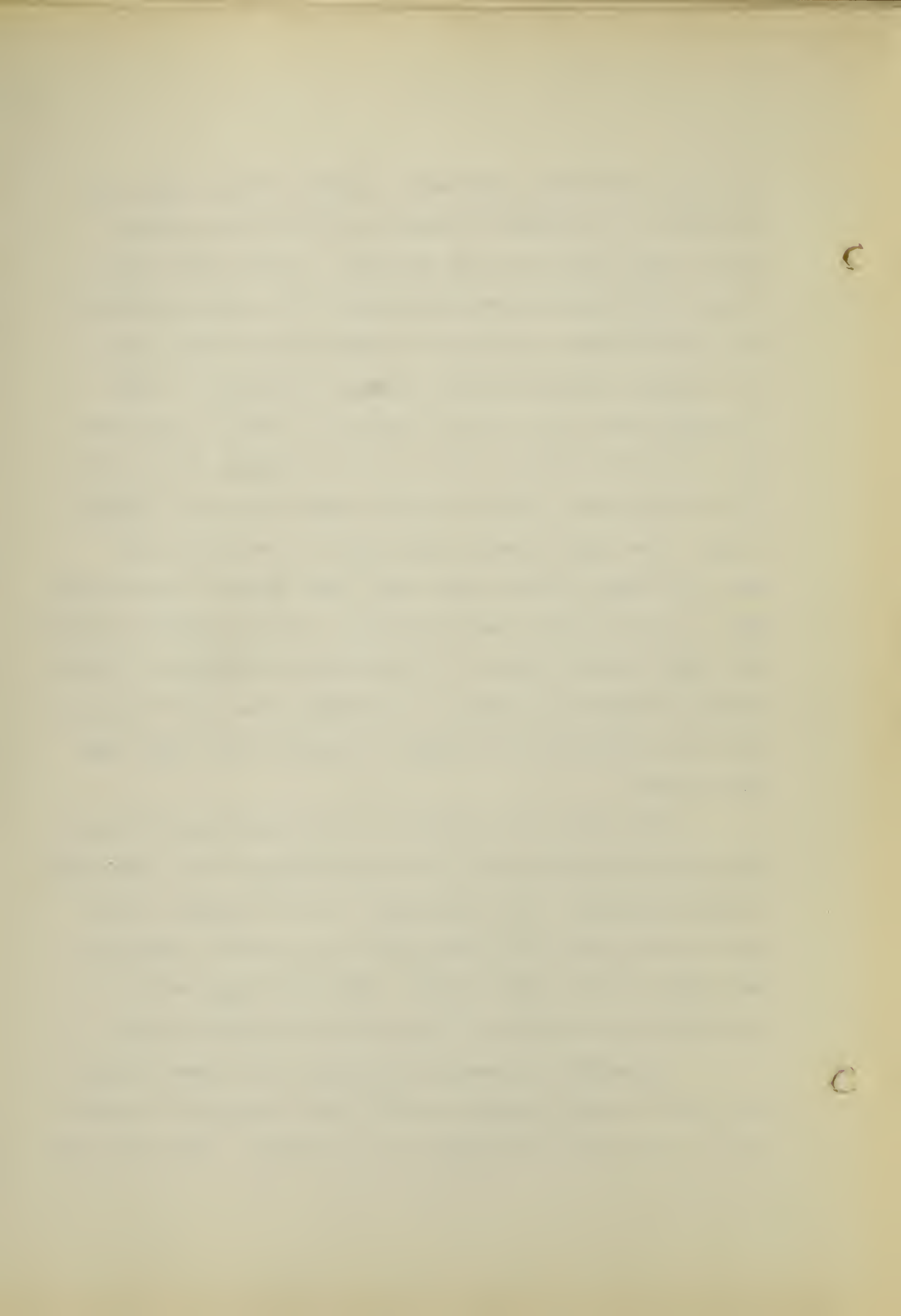
1. The Indians have produced two of Mexico's most able statesmen, Juarez and Diaz. Therefore, many people feel that in the un-mixed Indian race is the future salvation of Mexico.



chili and tortillas, with meat a special treat, fruit and vegetables if he cared to bother and there was always a little extra ground for his flowers. He had very little money, but he never knew actual want. His patron furnished food if necessary, cared for him when he was sick, hired his numerous children as they became old enough to work, pensioned him in his old age, buried him when he died and had a mass said for his soul. No one expected him to work all day every day. There was the siesta from one to three thirty. One could always take a day off and sit in the sun; just doing nothing with one's back against a warm adobe wall, a zarape around one's shoulders and the sombrero pulled well down over the eyes. No one worked on Sundays or church holidays (extremely numerous in Mexico) or on one's saint's day or on the patron's birthday. Tomorrow will come, why hurry today?

This group, the product of the land of poco tiempo, torn up and disorganized by the revolution and the preceding social discontent, have gone either to the Mexican cities where poverty among the lower class was already rampant or have come to the United States. They are completely unprepared by experience for the bustle of American life.

The number of Mexican immigrants has varied widely from time to time according to the state of unrest in Mexico and the reported opportunity in this country. The five years





from 1826 to 1830 was the high water mark for the nineteenth century when 4,595 made up 4.46% of the total number of immigrants entering during that period. This number was not again reached until this century. The following figures are interesting as indicative of the increased numbers<sup>1</sup> during the century.

Year	Number	Percentage of Total Immigration
1821-1825	222	0.54
1826-1830	4,595	4.46
1831-1835	4,215	1.66
1836-1840	2,384	0.68
1841-1845	1,848	0.42
1846-1850	1,423	0.11
1851-1855	1,281	0.07
1856-1860	1,797	0.21
1861-1865	748	0.09
1866-1870	1,443	0.09
1871-1875	2,573	0.14
1876-1880	2,589	0.22
1881-1885	1,913	0.06
1886-1890		
1891-1895	225	0.01
1896-1900	746	0.04
1901-1905	5,230	0.13
1906-1910	44,412	0.89
1911-1915	82,007	1.82
1916-1920	136,997	0.73
1921-1924	203,413	8.68

1. International Immigration Statistics, pp. 261-287.





The following yearly numbers<sup>1</sup> show an interesting variation due, most likely, to conditions in Mexico, the levying of a head tax and vise fee by the United States government, the rumor current through the Southwest in 1917 and 1918 that our government was conscripting Mexican aliens and sending them to France, the activities of Mexican Labor organization , Confederacion Regional Obrere Mexicana, the increased planting of cotton in west Texas, the growth of the sugar beet industry in California and numerous other reasons hardly worth noticing individually but contributing to the total force.

1917 -	16,438
1918 -	17,502
1919 -	28,844
1920 -	51,042
1921 -	29,603
1922 -	18,246
1923 -	62,709
1924 -	87,648
1925 -	32,964
1926 -	42,638

Not all of these immigrants stay, many of them come for a few years, a season, a few months and then go back to Mexico so these counts are little more than a guide to the possible number within the country. Also these figures naturally give only those legally entering the United States, while the shallow river and the imaginary line of treaty fame which compose the 1800 miles of boundary offer a glorious opportunity to just walk in. The head tax and consular vise

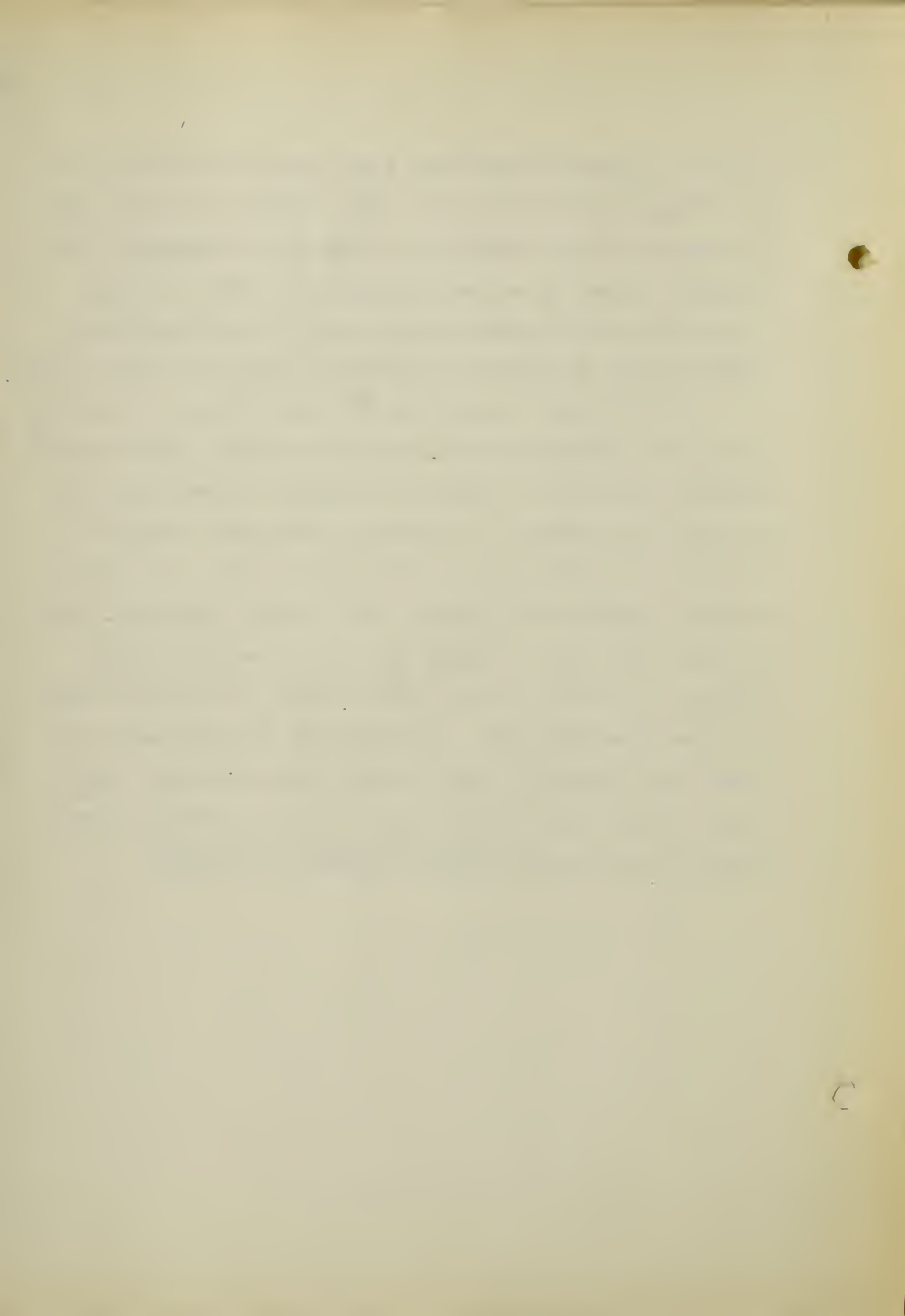
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1. Thomson: Restriction of Mexican Immigration.  
Journal of Applied Sociology, Vol. XI, p. 575.



amount to eighteen dollars for each adult and there is the ten dollar vise for each child under sixteen, although they are exempt from the head tax, so many of our immigrants for economic reasons do not enter through the ports. Anyway, they often fail to understand the head tax and vaccination ruling and see no reason for bothering with the Gringo's whims.

The Mexican family moves as a unit. This is true even in war time when the women go with the army to cook for their husbands and after the battles to plunder the dead and care for their own wounded. So enters the immigrant, whether by the back or the front door he is much the same. It is the peon who presents the problem of the Mexican immigrant. This man who comes with his worldly goods in a series of small bundles, by his side is his entire family, at least one dog and often a mocking bird. Sometimes all his treasures are piled upon a rickety, splay wheeled wagon drawn by a bony horse. Always, they "travel light" as beds, stoves, chairs, forks and such are all needless luxury to the peon.





## CHAPTER TWO

## The First Generation Within This Country.

Now that he is in the land of promise what happens? He is faced at once with the necessity of finding lodgings. Some settle upon small farms which they rent or work on shares. While others hire out as farm hands, the family living either on the place in a house provided by the employer or else in one of the ever present villages of the farm districts. These immigrants going to the agricultural districts have a much better chance to become useful and happy Americans than those who stay in the larger towns and cities.<sup>1</sup> Most of them find situations in the irrigated districts where they make good farmers and with a little guidance adopt modern methods.

The thrifty Mexican, who has that love of soil in his soul which seems to be a common bond among the peasants of the world; will in time buy a small piece of land and become a contented landlord. The number of acres in no way influences the pride of ownership. These people show the stabilizing effects of property and altho they may never speak English fluently, they will pay their taxes promptly, send their children to school, keep their share of the canals clean, the most important one duty in an irrigated land, and generally

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1. The United States census for 1920 states that of the 486,418 foreign born Mexicans in the United States 229,179 live in urban districts and 257,239 in rural districts.





assume their part of the community responsibilities. The farm seems to be an ideal stepping stone between Mexican and American ideas and ways of living. On a farm an American can make money, thru industry and application of advanced methods he may even acquire wealth. While the Mexican on the next place can make a living and at the same time have the leisure to enjoy life which to him is much more important than interest bearing bonds, trips abroad or a better car. To the less provident Mexican, who is content to remain a tenant, the farm assures a living for himself and family, so any actual money may burn a hole in his pocket with impunity.

The man who stays in the larger town is often less fortunate. He naturally locates among the Spanish speaking people in the Mexican part of town. The Mexican district as a rule has a plaza, a semi-open market, small stores, a few cheap movies, a church and countless shacks and tenements facing alleys, courts and streets. The typical Mexican tenement is a long , low adobe or brick building one or two rooms deep, built even with the sidewalk and having an unpaved court behind. The two room tenements have two doors, one opening on the street the other on the court, and two windows with the exception of the corner tenements where the two additional windows raise the customary five dollars monthly rent to seven or eight. In the brick tenements wood replaces the



packed dirt floors of the adobe buildings, but the thick adobe walls keep out the winter cold and the summer heat so successfully that there is little choice between the buildings. Both have common toilets at the end of the courtyard and the only water supply is a hydrant in the middle of the court. On the wall of one of these the newcomer hangs his reed bird cage, plants a few flowers in unpainted lard cans and sets up housekeeping. The chief articles of furniture are the stove and earthenware pots with perhaps one of the old hand wrought copper pots. Bed, chairs and tables come with time and "five and ten" cooking utensils replace the earthenware pots for everything except cooking the frijoles.

The men wear overalls and shoes like the American workman but they cling to the large sombreros. In Mexico the sombrero may be a gorgeous thing of felt elaborately trimmed with gold leaf, from this glory it passes thru all the stages of degradation to the woven palm hat of the peon. Whatever its stage of evolution the sombrero is to the heart of the Mexican man what the shawl is to the Mexican woman.

The women wear rather drab clothes, quite shapeless with full waists and very full skirts of cotton material. Then they wear the much-loved shawl! Among the pure Indians the shawl is hand woven of blue, dull red, brown and white





in a nondescript pattern. This is a "rebozo" and altho an Indian woman never goes without one, she seldom pulls it over her head but rather wraps it around her shoulders in a characteristic fashion and uses it to secure bundles to her back, the baby, or turkey or whatever she has to transport. Among the immigrants the shawl is a large non-transparent black affair with fringe and it is worn over the head with one end flung across the shoulder. The children follow the fashions of their parents even to the wee girl in her shawl.

There has been a great deal of talk of general laxity of Mexicans but it is extremely hard to judge their actions fairly for Latin and Anglo-Saxon morals have always been as different as Latin and Anglo-Saxon temperaments. The "common practice of having two wives in Mexico" has been much discussed, but no one seems to be sure how many do have two wives and what the social results are. The old trouble between church and state which led each to refuse to recognize as valid the marriages performed by the other did, beyond a doubt, result in confusion and most likely willful bigamy in a few cases. However, the peon, according to our standards, has been given rather <sup>to</sup> too little than too much marrying. It is not uncommon for a couple to put off marrying; they may even wait until they have grandchildren to attend the





ceremony. This does not mean a system of lax living or immoral practices. A couple simply establish a home together, their children are welcomed and beloved, no one feeling their status to be in any way different from the status of children born in more orthodox homes. The sense of responsibility and permanence in these unions, so closely akin to the Anglo-Saxon common law marriage allowed in the United States, are on a par with those of the customary type. These arrangements are so much a matter of course that often outsiders fail to realize that no legal marriage has taken place. They just expect to marry sometime, sometime before they die. During that last week of July 1926 when all Catholics in Mexico hastened to straighten their affairs with the church on one day in Santa Eulalia eighty couples came to the church to be married, these persons ranged from withered hags, who feared they might die before the churches were re-opened, to boys and girls who shortened their courtship to take advantage of the priests' last days. These ideas of the needlessness of exchanged vows have come with the immigrant to this country and have brought him much criticism in this land of easy divorce and remarriage.

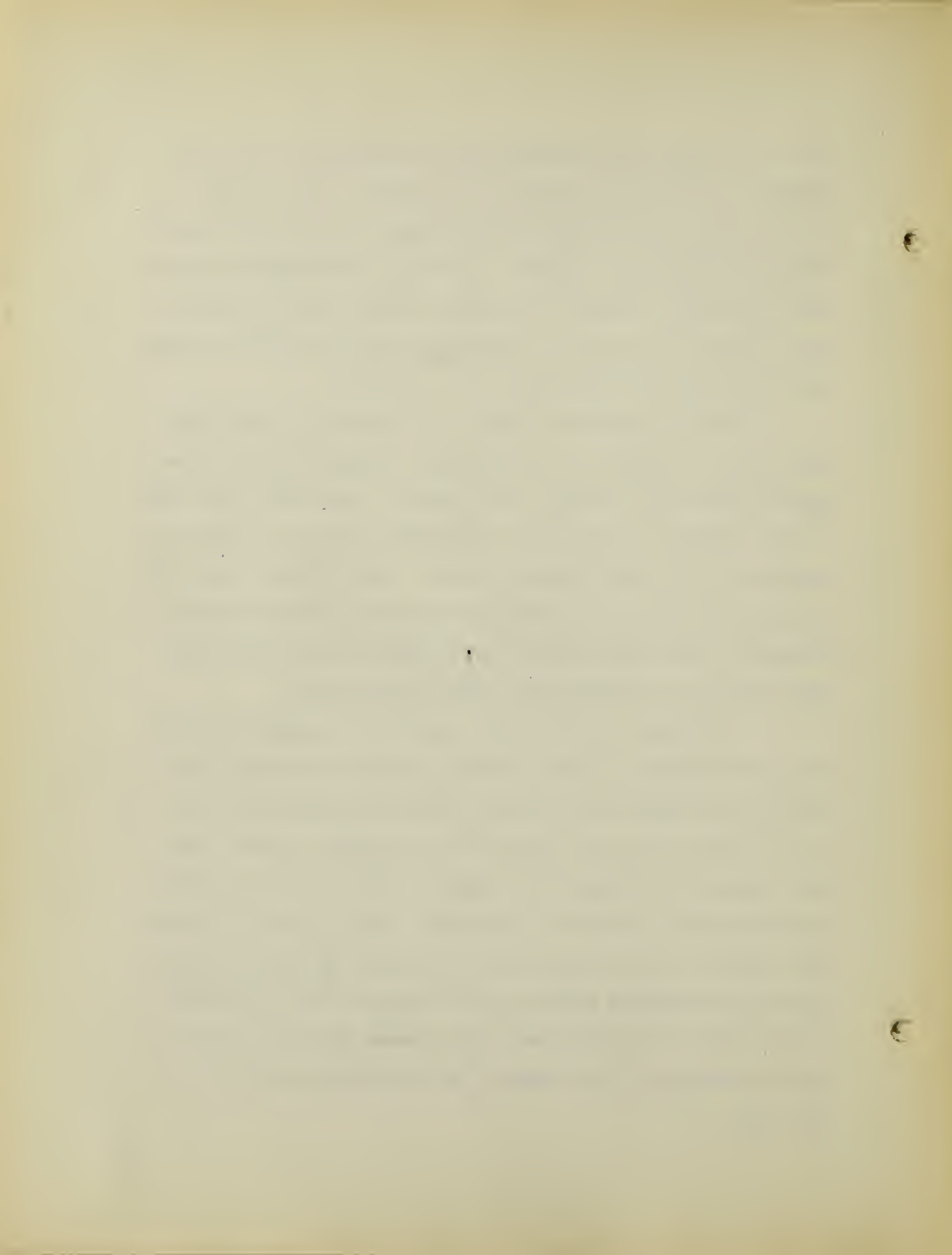
Another proof of their immorality usually cited is the prevalence of venereal diseases among them. Here again the evidence is likely to be hearsay. It is impossible to estimate the number of Mexicans infected as they do not



fully understand the advisability of reporting these diseases and receiving treatment at a clinic. Such clinics are all too rare thru the Southwest and in the agricultural districts completely unknown. Certainly the tenement house with its common toilets and central hydrant where usually a cup, dipper or tin can is left for the use of thirsty neighbors would spread any disease very quickly.

Living crowded as they do in spaces too small for any type of privacy it is remarkable the deep sense of personal modesty they develop and retain. One seldom sees even rugged Mexicans who are not sufficiently covered to meet the approval of the most careful person. This modesty leads the Mexican maid to be frightfully embarrassed if the mistress happens to see her changing her dress, while she will speak most freely of her extremely person experiences.

In Mexico the two great curses of mankind are gambling and drinking. These appear in various forms and take their place among the national sports and characteristics. In the towns along the border such as Juarez, Nogales and Tia Juana and in some of the larger cities of the interior large gambling houses are operated. These houses are closed from time to time according to the policy of the state and federal governments which are influenced by the financial needs of the government and the pressure brought to bear by the ministers of the cities on the Northern side of the line.





Judging from conditions in the Tivoli in Juarez the gambling is done almost entirely by Americans and a few upper class Mexicans. On Saturday nights there are always American laborers and their wives hanging over the tables but no Mexicans of a corresponding class, altho at some tables the playing starts with a quarter. At the fiestas, in the plazas and sometimes on the street corners the peon plays monte, keno and various other games on crude, homemade devices staking a few coppers at a time. Then the cock fight, so dear to the native heart, is another universal opportunity to gamble for even the lowest peon may raise a fighting cock of sorts. No matter how poor the fighting cock there will undoubtedly be others of its class to fight and plenty of individuals willing to bet which bird will be cut to pieces first.

The lottery system throughout the Republic has encouraged and perhaps bred this devotion to the goddess Chance. In addition to the National Lottery there are numerous state and city lotteries of varying amounts so that tickets may be bought for as little as ten centavos. In Mexico City the tickets are for sale at lottery shops, news stands, tobacco stalls, notion and toy stores and on the streets they replace the American pencils and chewing gum as stock for the selling beggars. It is good luck to buy from a hunchback so the Mexican hunchback has a profession in his affliction. After the drawing when the winning numbers are posted on placards



throughout the city little street urchins hang around to help people seek their numbers; with great rapidity these ignorant children check the list and either congratulate or sympathize with the ticket holder. If they cannot afford to play themselves it is fun to share with another.

All ages and classes follow the lottery; high and low, rich and poor, men and women, they carry these precious slips of paper in their pockets and purses. One young woman of the upper class told me she bought a two pesos ticket every week for a year and a half, praying her patron saint that she might win so she could leave her mother a large sum of money when she went to Spain to enter a religious order. The fact that she never did win more than a few pesos in no way seemed to influence her faith in the efficacy of prayer or the soundness of the lottery as an investment. It is generally conceded that no matter how corrupt the government as a whole may be the National Lottery is straight. With this idea of a gambling institution as a public benefactor and amusement it is striking the ease with which the immigrants seem to forget it. It was a part of the government in Mexico, in the United States it is not. He passively accepts this as another whim of a queer governmental system. There is almost no bootlegging of lottery tickets across the border and even the Chinese lotteries which operate under cover in the border towns seem to have few if any Mexican customers. As gambling is prohibited by law it does not offer the ever present temptation that open gambling





would, so in the United States the Mexican probably continues to gamble with his friends but it becomes a pastime, a friendly game with the gain or loss small.

The vice of drink is a little harder to leave behind at the boundary line. For centuries the Mexican has been given to drinking in large and daily quantities, beer, wine, sotol pulque and numerous other fiery beverages. In Mexico City on an ordinary day, when there is no extra drinking due to celebrations, 375,000 litres of pulque alone are sold.<sup>1</sup>

The Aztecs included the spirit of the maguey plant among their gods and as seen in their folk writings yearly at the time of the blossoming they held elaborate ceremonies and there was general celebration. From this plant is made the pulque, a most potent drink which according to the legends was well known to the Aztecs. The maguey is seldom allowed to bloom in Mexico for when the bud is formed "the stem is cut at its base and hollowed out and the sap that would have gone into the flowers is collected and converted into that evil-smelling, criminal-making concoction called pulque. When the sap gathers - at the rate of ten to fifteen pints a day - peons pass from plant to plant, and with their mouths to one end of a tube suck it up and then discharge it into containers made of pigskins, flung saddle-bag fashion across the back of an uncurried donkey. The liquid is then carried to the central station, where it is

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1. Peals, Carlton: The Mexican as He Is. North American Review, CCXIV, p. 543.





ripened in vats of untanned cowhide."<sup>1</sup> After the pulque has reached the proper stage of fermentation it is sold in pulque shops (the lowest type of saloon found in Mexico) and is peddled thru the streets and to the trains in ollas. The effects of drinking pulque have been variously described, the list of results is long including all the evils of mankind from serious stomach trouble, to mental dullness. As such charges are impossible to prove the question hangs, but certainly there is no reason to suppose that pulque increases the mental or physical ability of the habitual drinker. The keeping properties of pulque are such that it may not be bottled and shipped so its influence is geographically limited. Thru the maguey growing districts acres of the best farm lands are necessarily devoted to the maguey culture as the plants take seven years to develop and die after the extraction of the sap. In the districts distant from the maguey belts the peons drink sotol and tequilla, both very violent forms of alcohol made from cactus plants. They also drink beer in large but surprisingly harmless quantities. All of these beverages are bought rather than made at home so the immigrant brings with him no tradition of home brews and when he finds himself in a land where drinking is extremely expensive he buys from his fellow countrymen what sotol or tequilla he can afford and there his drinking ends.

Along the border the Mexicans do a great deal of rum running but exactly how much is uncertain as there is no way of being sure how much liquor goes thru undetected, and when

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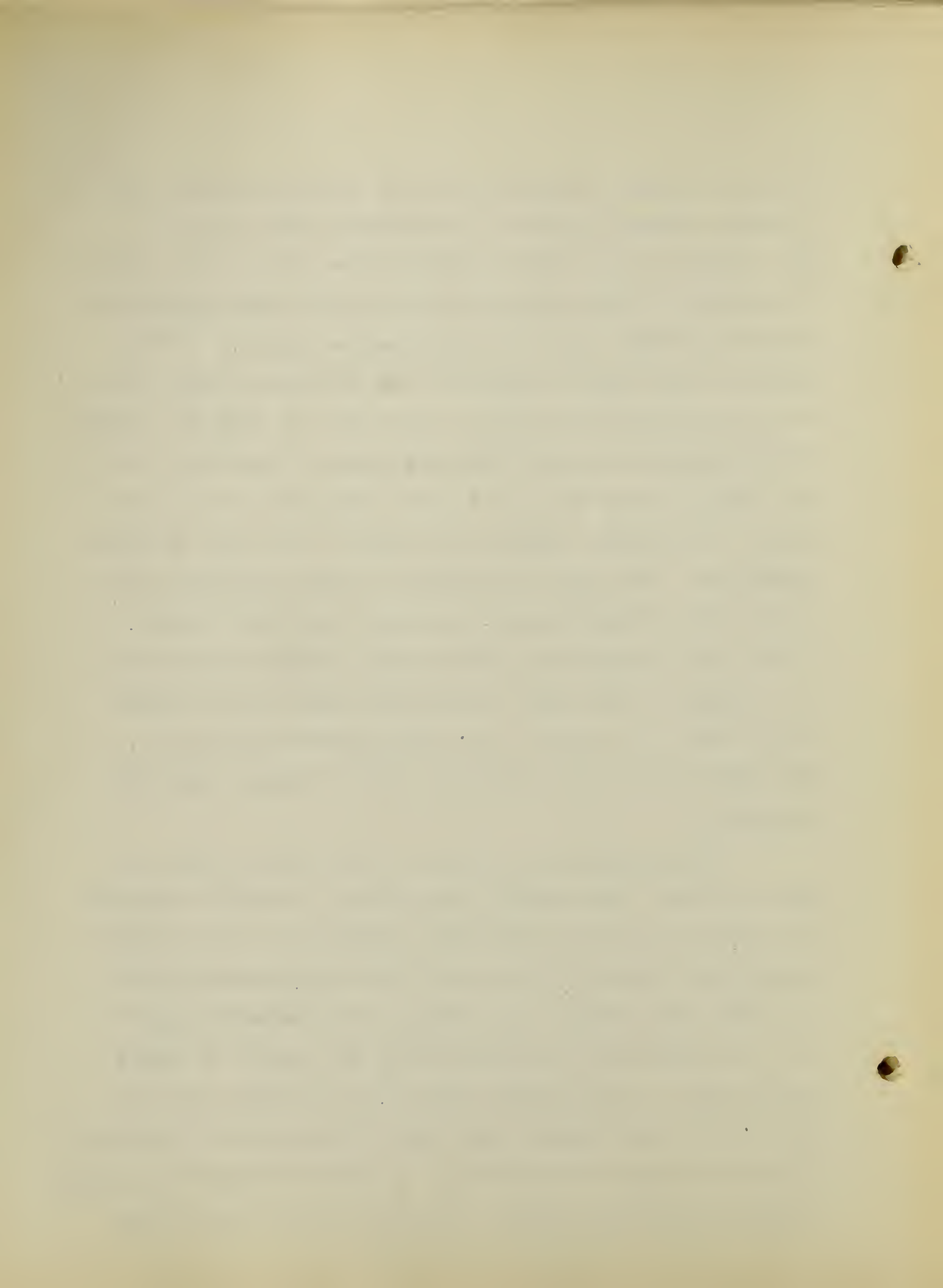
1. Wm. Prescott: The Luster of Ancient Mexico. The National Geographical Magazine, XXX, p. 16.



a person is caught there is no way of telling to which nation he really belongs, whether he is bringing liquor across to sell himself or as a tool for someone else, for in the trials which follow it would seem the real culprit seldom appears as there is so often talk of "an American man pay me." On the whole it seems safe to assume that in the United States, where it is so much more profitable to sell than to drink, the Mexican is overcoming his age old taste for liquor. This sudden end to his drinking seems to be an apparent fact, altho hard to explain. The economic factor does enter but there must be other reasons too. They have no background of home brewing and are already used to geographical limitations upon their thirst. In the maguey regions one drinks pulque, further north there is no pulque so one drinks tequilla and sotol, in the United States there is no sotol so one drinks coffee and soda pop. This explanation seems inadequate, but the Mexican reasoning is subtle.

The one remaining accusation against the Mexican is that he steals. Here again, the statement is rather sweeping. The pure breed Mexican Indians are notorious for their strict honesty, but the mixed race seem to have acquired another of the white man's faults. All Mexicans are no more dishonest than any other race, but the fact that the average immigrant family lives on wages varying from \$1.25 to \$2.50 a day and there is not work everyday puts them in the group of individuals living on the edge of starvation. To people who never have quite enough to eat, whose clothes are always less than the actual







amount needed for warmth, food, money and clothing carelessly left around are bound to prove a great temptation.

Americans who employ Mexicans find them generally quite trustworthy. From my own experience with Mexican servants and pupils certain cases stand out, not because they are unusual but rather because they seem to illustrate the "average Mexican." There was Inez who could be left to take care of the house, yard and dogs for weeks when the family was out of town; Inez who never left one cent unaccounted for or "misplaced" one treasure. There is Juana, who for twenty-five years has borrowed regularly to meet such unusual expenses as funerals, bailles, new coats and today grandchildren, but also has never failed to repay every penny, a small sum at a time without being reminded. There was Francisco, the yard man, who under ordinary circumstances was the soul of honor but in whose garden pink Holland tulips appeared the same year ours were planted; Luis, the child who wanted to cheat on his algebra examination and did not; Manuel, who had his little brother make the long trip to high school to return his state owned geometry text before the notice was sent; Alta Gracia, who never thought of keeping the scraps from the dresses she made; San Juan, who could be trusted to weigh cotton. Lastly, Disederia who will not eat the remaining desert unless told to do so, who will not take home the faded flowers without first asking permission, who would not touch an American cigarette without my consent but who cannot resist the Buen Tenos that come from Mexico.



These and numerous others have convinced me that the majority of the Mexicans are honest and self respecting.

It is true that in selling they always ask twice what an article is worth but they do not expect you to pay that sum; haggling is part of the game, a form of friendly competition, the man with the best technique carrying away the glory. The Mexican feels the American method of charging a set price, often plainly marked, lacks sociability, perhaps honesty and certainty leaves no scope for the bargaining talents of the individual. To the American the Mexican's method of asking more than he is willing to accept proves he is dishonest. Neither sees the other's point of view.

The Mexican is not truly lazy, yet it is in regard to his speed that he must often come in conflict with the American. When we hire a man to do certain things we expect him to do those things as rapidly as possible so that he may receive his pay and go on to other work. The Mexican sees no reason to hurry thru as there is only more work ahead, so he takes his time. Apparently, he has none of the joy the American has in work well done. He does his work well but to him "work is work; joy is joy. The two are not the same. There is joy in play, in music, in color, in rest, in the dance, but not in work."<sup>1</sup> They are so willing to do as they are told that we are likely to consider them dull or at least too lazy to think

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1. Bogardus: Second Generation Mexicans. Sociology and Social Research. XIII, p. 278.





but the truth is "th Mexican likes authority as he dislikes work. It is very much easier for him to follow, to obey, to imitate, than it is for him to lead, to command, or to originate."<sup>1</sup> He must be fitted into work where speed is secondary to careful detail, where there is no hurry and soul tiring competition. Here he will do his best work and here he will be less likely to come into active competition with the American laborer in such a way as to put either at a disadvantage.

A deep respect for authority and the reflection of the ages of his subjection the Mexican brings with him to this country, and if circumstances make it in any way possible he finds himself a patron. Sometimes, the best he can do, is to give his affection to the firm which employs him but usually it is a more personal attachment. The patron need not necessarily be the man's employer, he may be a friend acquired in numerous ways but his responsibility is the same in any case. Statements for passports, letters of recommendation, small loans, names for the children all come in the duties of the patron and in many cases a widow, orphans or the individual in illness or old age are the responsibilities the patron is expected to assume. It is remarkable how natural a relationship grows up between the patron and the Mexican and how much a matter of course these responsibilities become. A few years ago Gabriel the aging head janitor at the Texas College of Mines was ill, the faculty had a doctor call and when he found the man's teeth to be the cause of his trouble, they sent Gabriel to better dentists than the

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1. Bogardus: Second Generation Mexicans, Sociology and Social Research, XIII, p. 278.





country clinic offered and paid for his new set of teeth. All of this Gabriel accepted as a matter of course, the faculty were his patrons. On the other hand he will never accept tips for the extra services he performs from time to time.

This system of patrons probably attributes to the Mexican's lack of care for the future. He seems to have an innate aversion to looking ahead, tomorrow is not here, yet; it may never come and if it does it will take care of itself. This philosophy often leads to the Mexican becoming a public charge.

Goethe states that in Los Angeles where the Mexican makes up 5% of the population he constitutes 27% of the cases of the Outdoor Relief Division, 53.3% of the cases of the Catholic Charities Bureau, 43% of those of the General Hospital, and 62 1/3% of the cases handled by the City Maternity Service.<sup>1</sup> Professor Bogardus estimates that the Mexican composes 7 to 8% of the population of Los Angeles and 28 to 30% of the charity cases.<sup>2</sup> Whichever estimate is correct and even allowing for the fact that much seasonal labor flows to Los Angeles still the tendency of the Mexican to become a public burden is quite marked.

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1. Goethe: Danger of Unrestricted Mexican Immigration, Current History, XXIXIII, p. 768.
  2. Bogardus: The Mexican Immigrant and the Quota, Sociology and Social Research XII. p. 372.



The Mexicans who settle on farms are well started upon a very gradual and fairly painless adjustment to American ways of life, but these by no means compose the bulk of the immigrants; there are still many thousands in urban districts to find work chiefly as unskilled laborers. "Unskilled Mexican laborers may be divided roughly into two classes. First, there are those who have been here as immigrants for some time. They work somewhat steadily, demand more wages and refuse 'to live in a potato sack.' Some are buying homes and otherwise becoming like American workmen. Second, there are the newcomers who have not had much opportunity in Mexico, who are not efficient, and who will work for the wages the employers wish to pay." <sup>1</sup>

Mexican men find far from permanent work on the railroads, in the ice houses, in smelters. In all these fields they meet with opposition from the American laborers and condemnation from the Labor Unions because their standards of living will allow them to work for such low wages. The Immigrant Commission found their wage was the lowest paid to laborers who were simply on the maintenance-of-way railroad work, that they worked for 25% less than even the Japanese. <sup>2</sup> They accept the jobs which are so poorly paid or of such short duration that the more foresighted races refuse them. This very acceptance works in a circle, the employer will not pay more because the

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1. Bogardus: The Mexican Immigrant, Journal of Applied Sociology XI, p. 478.

2. Jenks and Lanck: The Immigration Problem, p. 227.





Mexican will work for less. As the Mexican does not demand steady employment many become seasonal laborers; they pick cotton in the Southwest, work in the sugar beet industry farther north and are employed by the fruit and nut growers in California. In all these lines they are badly needed for a few months each year - "the crops could not be harvested without them." The Mexican is well paid during these working periods but seems to be unable to save anything ahead toward those lean months when work will be scarce. If he has a few extra dollars, he sees no reason for acquiring more. At the peak of the cotton picking season in West Texas, when work is abundant and pickers are being paid two dollars a hundred, often a whole family will lay off until they have "lived up" their surplus money. To avoid such delays some employers pay only a certain portion of the wages each day and the rest at the end of the season. This practice is all right if the employer is strictly honest, but all Americans are no more honest than all Mexicans are dishonest. There is also the danger that any considerable sum of money in his possession at one time may so completely dazzle the Mexican that he will invest in a fourth hand Ford, brilliant but thin clothes and new yellow shoes for all the family; then after a short time the crowd is in need of financial help.

In the towns the woman works quite steadily, usually at housework, where she proves to be a valuable and reliable servant, industrious, neat and honest. Her willingness makes up for her language handicap, her many kindnesses to the baby and



the dog for the fact she at first knows how to cook nothing but beans and fried meat. These women seldom develop into anything more than "good plain cooks" and although they learn slowly once a thing is learned it is there to stay and it is a wise mistress who never tries to change her routine and clean on Thursday instead of Wednesday. Although they see no reason for coffee in large cups at breakfast and in small cups after dinner, they clean with the greatest care and make the most faithful, dependable and loyal servant friends imaginable. Sometimes they bring their children with them and the older children often help with the work. Mexican children seldom go to work until they are ten or twelve when they find jobs as messenger boys, newsboys, Kress clerks and in the less strenuous forms of labor.

For men, women and children the wages are equally low. Bogardus gives the median wage in California as \$2.75 to \$3.25 a day<sup>1</sup> which is much higher than the wages paid in El Paso where ordinary wages run about as follows:-

Yard men.....	\$2.00 per day
Woman, plain sewing.....	\$1.50, car fare (12c.) and lunch
Laundress or cleaner.....	5.00 per week, and one meal a day.
Clerks in cheaper stores...	4.50- 7.00 per week.
Industrial workers (male)...	1.60- 1.72 a day (8 hours).
House maid.....	4.00- 7.00 a week.
Cook.....	5.50 and up

None of these prices include lodgings although often a room is

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1. Bogardus: The Mexican Immigrant, Journal of Applied Sociology, XI, p. 473.





furnished a house maid or cook. With wages such as these there is small wonder that the Mexican becomes an object of charity in his periods of adversity.

As the immigrants live in isolated parts of the town their children in the lower grades are often in schools entirely Mexican. This has its benefits in that language difficulty being about the same throughout the group and the older children being more usual in the lower grades are therefore not as likely to drop out because of shame. Unfortunately, often either inexperienced or disinterested teachers are given these important classes and their carelessness and lack of sympathy do more harm than good. The Mexican child is a willing little soul, anxious to learn and easily led, but he has the Indian's stubbornness when antagonized. From the third grade on the children tend to drop out of school through financial need, shame at their relative ages with others in the same grade and a general lessening of interest in the material presented. The parents allow the children to leave school without much protest, as only the most ambitious ones see any great advantage in the ability to do more than count change, read headlines, and write the frequent letters they send their friends and relatives. The Mexican parent should not be too readily condemned for his lack of zeal in keeping his children in school; he naturally takes the path of the least resistance and he is a product of Mexico where today 62% of the entire population is illiterate!<sup>1</sup> These children stay out of school as the truancy

1. Saenz: Some Mexican Problems, p. 61.





laws are often not strictly enforced. This laxity is due in part to a group of short sighted Americans who often express the feeling "we pay the taxes, the Mexican does not, why should we educate him and his children in our schools." This inexcusably stupid form of reasoning, while being very little recommendation for the educational advantages denied the Mexican, certainly does a great deal of harm in intensifying the prejudice between the races. Also from the cold standpoint of dollars and cents it is probably cheaper to support schools than poor farms, charity hospitals, reformatories and prisons. The Mexican is here, many hundreds of thousands strong, irrespective of whether he should be or not and we have nothing to gain by denying him education, which we so proudly hold to be the basis of our successful democracy.

When Aristotle made his famous statement to the effect that man is a political animal he exactly described the Mexican for he whole-heartedly enjoys politics. In Mexico the franchise is universal and the mere detail of being unable to read the ballot has never prevented the Mexican from voting as each candidate is represented by a symbol. Garcia may have a blue circle and Gomez a red, white and green cross which are permanently exhibited on banners, placards and billboards during the campaign and appear on the ballot beside the man's name. This free use of signs removes all distinctions and every man has an equal chance at the pools, in the rewards of the victor or in the revolutionary army of the defeated candidate. One of the



things the newcomer always wonders at is the ease with which the defeated American candidate takes his place in the same community and no revolution follows the counting of votes. To realize his surprise we should remember that between 1821 and 1920 Mexico had seventy-two different governments!<sup>1</sup> We should remember that in the years since the Spanish were driven out only two presidents have died a natural death in Mexico; Santa Anna who had been in exile and Juarez concerning whose sudden death there has always been a hint of poison. Calles and Gil are still alive and in Mexico, but the others either died a violent death in the Republic, died in exile or are still living in exile.<sup>2</sup> Small wonder they fail to comprehend the political system of a land where only three presidents have been assassinated and none exiled.

In this country as in his home land the Mexican is easily swayed by oratory, especially that of his own people. In El Paso County the Mexicans, whose ancestors settled the valley and who hold their lands largely under grants made by the Spanish crown, make able politicians and reliable and trustworthy officials. The newcomers, however, have no conception of either issues or candidates and through their willingness to vote anyway constitute the nucleus for an easily controlled vote if not an actually bought vote. The poll tax system, whereby the voter pays his tax months before the

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1. Ibanes: Mexico in Revolution, p. 2.

2. This statement of affairs was made over and over again by people who should have known after the shooting of Obregon in July 1928, but I have never seen the statement in print.





election has checked the number of illegal votes, but some still "vote freely."

Unfortunately both in Mexico and in this country the Mexican puts little value upon human life. This may possibly be due to his ancient background of bloodshed. "The Aztecs and other tribes had their bloody, religious human sacrifices, sacrifices witnessed by tens of thousands of frenzied people. One need but recall the terrible sacrifice that took place during the reign of Ahuizotl at the completion of the lofty teocalli of Mexico City. At the first streaks of dawn a long, sacerdotal procession wound slowly and in state, up and up the steep sides of the temple to the huge sacrificial stone, a mammoth convex block of jasper, where six priests with long matted locks, flowing Medusa like over their black hieroglyphic covered robes, awaited the wretched victims. One by one these were sacrificed before the eyes of the breathless multitude below. Five priests held the head and limbs, while the sixth, clad in a blood-red cape, slit open the breast with a sharp razor of itztli, a flint like lave, and, thrusting his hand into the body, tore out the palpitating heart. With a mighty gesture it was held up toward the sun, and then flung smoking at the feet of the terrible war god, Huitzilopochtli, whose repulsive shape towered above the prostrated masses. Every day until dark, for four long days, every day until priests and the stones on which they stood were reeking with blood, the sacrifice continued. The Spanish abolished these practices,



but replaced them with massacre, the Inquisition and bullfights. Thus Mexican bloodthirstiness is the product of Aztec and Spanish character."<sup>1</sup> The last cycle of revolution with its almost daily bloodshed has done little to increase the value placed upon man's life. The hero has been the man who knew how to die gallantly. Poor, miserable peons as well as dashing officers have shown a steadiness and courage before a firing squad which we Anglo Saxon must also admire. Magnificent as is the ability to die laughing, the national emphasis upon courageous dying rather than worth-while living has had an injurious effect upon the Mexican mind. He sees life as hardly worth striving to prolong. The death rate of Mexico City is the highest of any city in the civilized world; 43 per 1,000 and throughout the Republic there is a general neglect of health. When the Mexican comes to the United States he brings with him his small value upon human life and although he improves in the case of his health he is far from giving himself adequate attention. In the United States his poor health is partially due to ignorance and partially to circumstances. The Mexicans live chiefly upon tortillas and frijoles which do not build resistance to disease. They live in crowded quarters, have no great love for open windows or fresh air and as their clothing is scanty they readily become victims of respiratory diseases, especially tuberculosis. In Los Angeles as a whole 17.4% of

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1. Beals: The Mexican As He Is, p. 544.





the deaths were due to tuberculosis, but in the Mexican district of the city 39.2% of the deaths were due to this cause!<sup>1</sup>

The families are often large, certainly much larger than the American family in the same localities. This high birth rate also results in a high rate of infant mortality. They have the Latin aversion to male attendants at childbirth, so midwives and neighbors usually assist at a delivery, which means not only inferior care at the time but that there has been almost no prenatal attention. Often the women bear children close together and work until a very short time before confinement, one or two days. The mother returns to work as soon as physically possible after the child's birth and the care of the baby is delegated to the other children of the family who although perhaps willing are not capable of dealing with the responsibility placed upon them. Through poverty and ignorance the infants are fed tea, coffee, what the family eats. Sometimes they have milk if it does not cost too much but it is often sour as ice, too, is expensive. Day clinics, visiting nurses and free milk help, but in the struggle for child life cod liver oil, orange juice and spinach make slow progress against ages of ignorance. So the babies die and the family, although grieving sincerely when they take the tiny blue or pink coffin to the cemetery are resigned - "some are bound to die." They never knowingly neglect the young or the old and care for them

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1. Oxnam: The Mexican in Los Angeles from the Standpoint of the Religious Forces of the City, p. 130.



devotedly but the Mexican's whole attitude toward life and death is fatalistic.

But the Mexican's life is not all bloodshed and sorrow, for recreation he has the baile, where he dances wildly two thirds of the night to the soft music of a string band, varying in size with the wealth of the host. He loves music, both the minor repetitions of Mexico and the wilder rhythms of the United States. In El Paso on summer nights when the civil and military bands hold their concerts in the various parks and plazas the Mexican population turns out, upper class, middle class and peons. As the band plays the Mexicans follow their native custom and walk around and around the plaza, the women walking in one direction, the men in the other. As friends pass they nod and smile but there is no talking, no disturbance, they are listening to and enjoying the music. Between the numbers friends gather and chat but at the first note the procession forms again, men and women walking separately, never in the same line.

The Roman Catholic Church to the average Mexican has always filled a great want, it has satisfied the deep hunger in his soul for beauty, color and sympathy. It has been the center of his life supplying not only spiritual comfort but taking a large place in his everyday life. The priests coming into Mexico with Cortez found it impossible to completely replace the Aztec religious forms which had so long been part of the life of the people





so they took over the deeply-ingrained customs of the Aztecs and gave them a Christian significance. The dances used for pagan festivals were transferred to Church feasts which became the chief holidays of the country. The Mexican is honestly devout, his religion is a very personal affair, God, the Virgin and the saints are very real persons to him and their interest and help a positive fact. The church is truly the house of God and as such should be fittingly decorated with paper flowers and other treasures. The figures of the saints represent real men and women and so are dressed in actual clothes with careful attention to detail. In a church in Monterey there is a figure of Saint Peter whose hands, elegantly clad in red silk gloves, hold the proverbial keys. In South El Paso there is a virgin of sorrows wearing over her head the black shawl of the peon woman and in her hand is an exquisite drawn work handkerchief. Usually the figure of the crucified Christ in a Mexican church is no presentation of abstract sacrifice but the broken, tortured body of an Indian, a man who died in the greatest agony upon a cross. These figures of the crucifixion are so realistic they bring horror to the American despite the starched lace trimmed apron which the Mexican modestly ties around the figure. With the Mexican to this country comes this emphasis upon religion, it is a concrete experience, the center of his life, his source of recreation, beauty and comfort. The men may become Masons but the women staunchly stand by the old faith and they all plan to die



within the church and be buried in consecrated ground. Whatever may have been the faults of the Roman Catholic Church in Mexico and they have been many and serious, the warmth and emotionalism of this religion does fit it peculiarly to meet the needs of these trusting child-like people.

After the Mexican settles in the United States he is not cut off entirely from Mexico; he is bound to her by many ties which may be broken in time but to the first generation at least are strong. There seems to be no valid reason to believe the Mexican will be a greater addition to the United States if he forgets the traditions and ways of his own country. He has a great heritage and by being proud of it and improving his own talents and innate abilities he will contribute more to his adopted land than by aping the outward manifestations of a half understood culture.

What are the ties which hold him? He is held by his language. Most of the women and many of the men of the immigrant class never learn to speak English. The stores have clerks who speak both languages, English is a hard language to learn and the sounds are harsh so most immigrants use their own beautiful mother tongue unless forced to change because of economic conditions, even then Spanish remains the language of the home.

Their love of music holds them and the old





Mexican songs are sung and played everywhere. Music is used continually by the Mexican; he serenades for his wooing, he has music in his plaza, single guitar players walk the streets and sing for a few coppers, in his market there is often a small group of men playing while the lunch stand keepers sell tamales and the housewives argue over the price of chili and lard.

His folk lore also forms a bond. The stories of Aztec greatness which were repeated over three centuries ago to keep alive the self respect of a people crushed by Spanish power are today part of the memory of the race and certainly no one would deprive them of this fondness for their past glory. The religious traditions, especially those surrounding the Lady of Guadalupe, are dear to the peon. According to the legend the Virgin herself appeared to a Mexican, to a peon, and directed him to have a church built in her honor. Then the Lady of Guadalupe later as the patron of the revolutionary army helped Hidalgo drive out the Spanish. They always forget la Seneca de los Remedios who was the patron of the Spanish. When the Lady of Guadalupe makes her annual visit to Mexico the Mexican immigrant must think with longing of his own country where fires are being lighted lest she lose her way. The appearance of the Virgin at Guadalupe is by no means the only miracle Mexico claims and all these create a feeling that surely a land so honored must be very dear to God.



It is hard not to transfer one's hero worship with one's household goods. Hidalgo and Juarez are the two great heroes of Mexico and they come to this country enshrined in the immigrant's heart. Hidalgo, a parish priest, who thru the help of the Lady of Guadalupe and his own martyrdom expelled the Spanish. Juarez, a Zapotec Indian, who rallied his troops at Paso del Norte on the northern-most edge of Mexico drove out the French and made the nation once more a Republic. To the peon these two men are the defenders of the poor, the weak and the downtrodden, naturally his love for them does not stop at the river.

Greater than all these as a force focusing the wanderer's attention upon Mexico is his own personal memory of the great beauty of Mexico, intensified by stories of the parts he has not seen. The Mexican remembers the old Spanish churches, the glory of the public buildings in the larger cities, their lovely exteriors and their highly ornamental interiors. When he is faced with the drab walls of tenements and the dull colors of concrete and brick buildings naturally he longs for the land where even the humblest houses may be pink, blue or Nile green with scenes painted upon the outer walls.

To the more than 500,000 Mexicans who live in the arid lands of the Southwest, the thought of the great natural beauty of Mexico must be a poignant memory. Flowers are so abundant in Mexico and so scarce in the irrigated

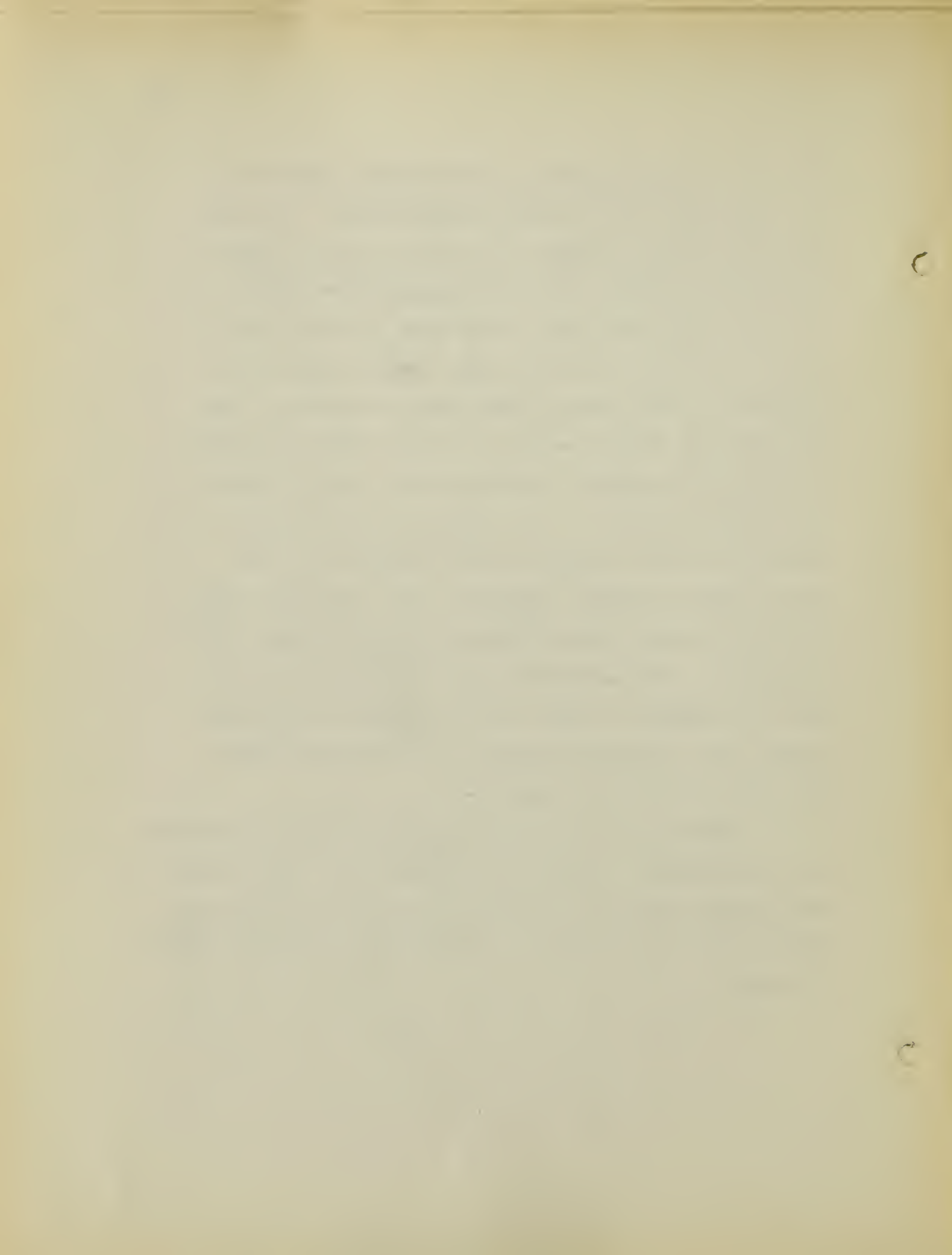




districts of the Southwest. Nevertheless flowers are a constant part of the Mexican's surroundings. The upper classes have lovely gardens and in El Paso take a large share of the prizes at the semi-annual flower shows.

The Mexicans plant what ground they have, if there is no ground to be had they plant their "King's finger" and oleanders in lard cans and hang them on the wall. This deep love for flowers seems to be one of the most fundamental of the Mexican's traits, only the lowest fails to work for his flowers. I have seen beautiful flowers blooming in pots on planks placed between the second story windows of dirty tenements, cans of flowers along the side of single room dwellings and small shops. Even the jacals in the deserts of west Texas and New Mexico have their cannas, saffron and transplanted cactus surrounded with whitewashed stones. In the desert where every drop of water is precious!

These age old loves of the immigrant do not prevent his assimilation. We may with justice ask him to learn our language, adopt our methods of sanitation, attend our schools but we can hardly ask him to break entirely with the past.



## CHAPTER III.

## The Second Generation

The native born children of Mexican parents have gone a long way upon the road toward American ways; the boys have gone farther than the girls who are held back by the restrictions Latins throw around their daughters, altho economic necessity has done much to free the girls. Where the family is very poor and the girls have to work the chaperonage of the girls has been much relaxed. Even a vigilant Mexican father sees the incongruity of allowing his daughter to clerk all day at Kress' and then refusing to let her go to the movies in the evening.

Thru the efforts of the second generation and easy payment plans the home of the immigrant begins to change. The family may still live in a tenement, but there will be more furniture. The children will insist upon beds and altho the parents may still sleep on the floor on folded blankets or mats the children realize a bed is "standard equipment" and use one. More chairs appear, tinted pictures of the members of the family hang on the walls along with the pictures of Hidalgo and the Lady of Guadalupe, there are lace curtains at the windows and paper flowers in vases. The children





may even insist upon knives and forks and spoons instead of a folded tortilla for eating ones meals. Often the parents can not go quite as far as the children in adopting these new ideas. Each seems to go his way in kindly tolerance of the other. I have seen an American born girl set the table carefully and sit down to eat her meal leisurely while her mother leaned against the table and ate her food out of the pots on the stove, using a piece of bread as the only addition to her natural equipment. They talked to each other during the meal; they were eating dinner together but not in the same fashion.

After the children start to school they dress as much like Americans as they possibly can and this copying increases with the age of the children. With the boys American clothes are easily assumed but the girls have more trouble, especially in the matter of hats. The Mexican women for centuries have worn shawls, the type and quality varying with the woman's station and age. To change from the gracefully draped shawl, which falls around the shoulders at least and often enfolds the entire body, to a piece of straw or felt on top of one's head is quite a step. At first a woman must feel frightfully immodest without her shawl and her neck must feel naked! Some of the older women never achieve this transition and it is an ordinary sight to see a carefully groomed young Mexican woman dressed in the latest department store fashion walking

THE HISTORY OF THE  
CITY OF BOSTON  
FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT  
TO THE PRESENT TIME  
BY  
JOHN HUTCHINGS  
OF THE BARRISTER AT LAW  
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE  
IN GREAT BRITAIN  
AND OF THE COMMONS OF GREAT BRITAIN  
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED  
IN THE YEAR 1764  
LONDON: Printed by J. DODD, in Pall-mall.  
MDCCLXIV.

beside an older woman wrapped in her shawl. They love their shawls, these Mexican women, and never quite give them up even the most advanced wearing them to church on Good Friday and to the funerals of relatives and very dear friends.

The native born children, as a general rule, stay in school longer than the foreign born children; for one thing they have a better chance starting with children their own age, and then their friends are going and the language is not so much trouble because they have heard a little English all their lives. In California it has been found expedient to segregate these children for the first five grades, after which time they enter the mixed schools without a handicap and make ordinary progress. At the Lincoln Park School in El Paso the academic work showed a decided improvement when a charity or two cent lunch of soup with bread and butter was served the children at school, showing in this case at least mind and body were closely allied. The Mexican child is not dull and according to a series of mental tests given "the city Mexican ranks higher than the rural American child, altho he ranks lower than the urban American. The rural Mexican ranks below the rural American."<sup>1</sup>

The second generation stay in school thru the grades as a rule and then some of them go on to high

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1. Handman: The Mexican Immigrant in Texas, p. 337.





school. In the El Paso High School they have, as a whole, done very good work and have carried away a proportionate number of honors. The vocational schools appeal to the older children as here they see a direct preparation for earning a living and even the duller ones are helped by this form of training. Under the provisions of the Smith-Hughes act these children of new comers are trained to become artesans rather than day laborers, to be stenographers and dressmakers rather than clerks and to be efficient house servants rather than drudges.

The night schools are not so successful. There are many older men and a few older women who attend to learn, but there are also numerous young girls who see in night school a good excuse for being away from home in the evening, something watchful parents would not allow under ordinary conditions. To this group and the boys who go to night school it is one long and joyful date, the center of one's social life. Some students even select which night school they will attend upon the relative merits of the monthly parties given by the administration. Only a few of the children of the lowest classes ever go to college. Usually it takes a better than peon background or three generations in America for college ambitions to be established. The Mexican is decidedly worth educating, as with education his birth rate declines, his standard of living rises, his self respect



increases and he begins to take his place as an asset to the community.

One of the most encouraging signs in the Mexican child is the joy with which he uses the public library. The El Paso Public Library has two branches in the Mexican parts of the town where several hundred children stand in line during the "weekly Branch afternoon" to exchange their two books for new ones. Many more come to the main library, settling the members of the family too young to read with picture books, they carefully go over the open shelves. Their choice of reading matter is quite commendable, they read American History avidly, exploits of heroes the world over thrill them and then they read the general assortment of "Children's books." Altho most libraries circulate some Spanish books, the greater part of the reading is done by the second generation and they read in English.

The direct results of these institutions are seen in the type of work the second generation does. The men are mechanics and skilled laborers rather than ditch diggers. The women do more responsible work; they become clerks in the better stores and work in beauty shops; they become "home dressmakers" or do work in modiste shops; they do clerical work of different kinds often finding their use of two languages a decided asset. Beauty shop work may not sound very ambitious but the girl who gives marcelles in a large department store, where she sees American





women at their best and worst, where she must wear American clothes and keep herself carefully groomed, has gone a long way beyond her mother who hung her shawl on a hook and cleaned all day in shapeless clothes and broken shoes.

The children no longer go to work at ten but stay in school and find jobs after school hours, using the extra money for better clothes, movies and music lessons.

Unfortunately, the family income does not rise as rapidly as the standard of living so the second generation is faced with the same problem of making the ends meet. They do it, somehow, chiefly by regarding the family as a unit and using the individual wages for the mutual benefit.

There is surprisingly little conflict between this advanced second generation and the still fairly dazed first generation. It is hard to explain why this should be the case with the Mexican when most other races go thru such a heartbreaking period of Americanization, the children feeling their parents are foreign and queer, the parents that their children are on the brink of destruction. The Mexican child has been early trained in absolute obedience to his parents, and this obedience is based upon a very real and deep devotion which may help the situation. Perhaps the Mexican's naturally affectionate nature combined with his general passivity has made it possible for him to accept the new conditions with good grace. Whatever the cause a commencement time never passes that one does not see scrubbed Mexican children



introducing beshawled and smiling mothers to their teachers with apparently no feeling of embarrassment or shame for the mother's lack of either English or hat.

The increasing standard of living brings with it new interests, increased demands for recreation, old joys and interests are forgotten. The movies furnish the chief amusement of the more sophisticated Mexicans and no border town but has its Mexican movie houses. These differ as widely as their American models but most of them have longer programs and the subtitles are printed in both English and Spanish. Some of the theatres also present vaudeville which may be the crudest of slapstick comedy one night and well-sung grand opera the next, the Mexicans applauding, cheering or hissing each effort. There is no silent drama about a motion picture when the audience is made up chiefly of Mexicans, they shout as wildly and boo as violently as tho the characters could respond. These same Mexicans in a theatre in the American section of town will be quiet and orderly, but most likely they do not enjoy the show as much.

The baille still goes on but these younger Mexicans go more and more frequently to the public dance halls and to club or school dances. Here they dance to more lively music, which music they later introduce into their homes via the victrola, which is one piece of furniture the whole family loves. Parents often refuse to let their girls go to these dancing places and altho some undboughtedly do slip away





without their parents consent the daughters as a whole seem to be very docile. Mexico has always been a "man's country" and the daughters are taught to believe that man's word is law. It will be interesting to see how the third generation solves this question of "man-rule".

Athletics also appeal strongly to these newcomers. In Mexico the men have played handball and a few other such games, but their national sport - bull fighting - is always limited to a trained few. The older men continue their handball but their children enter into a much wider field of sport. They play some baseball, but they are a little light for football and some coaches find the average Mexican too hot tempered to make a successful player. Basketball seems to be unusually well suited to their temperaments and here they make a very good showing. The El Paso High School basketball team since 1918 has made an enviable record in the Texas Interscholastic League and not a single squad in that time but has had at least one Mexican on the first team and often two or three. This interest in athletics has influenced some students to go on to college as Miguel, the captain of the 1928 team, an American born child of non-English speaking parents, who is now doing good academic work at Saint Edward's College (Austin, Texas) and is playing on their first team.

Religion is not as important to the second generation as it was to the first; there are so many other interesting things in life. They no longer all belong to the Catholic



church, altho the vast majority are still members. In Dallas among 350 families Handman found less than 50 Protestants,<sup>1</sup> the number remaining with the old faith increases a little with proximity to the border. All the churches have taken up social programs and their greatest influence is thru their community centers where dogma gives way to emphasis upon morals, athletics and clean necks. The different churches and missions have their basketball teams and the church league with its well attended games leads to good fellowship and religious tolerance but rather startling headlines -- "Jesus Herrera leads Holy Family to victory over Trinity Methodists."

While the Mexican is adapting himself to American ways he is very slow about becoming a citizen. The 1920 census showed that of the 189,974 Mexican men over twenty-one in this country only 6,363 (3.3%) were citizens while 2,506 had taken out their first papers; of the 129,723 women over twenty-one 11,261 (8.7%) were citizens and 340 had taken out their first papers. This lack of interest in naturalization may be due to several factors. Most of the immigrants dream some day of returning to Mexico with the wealth they have acquired in the United States. They fail to understand the process of becoming a citizen and

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1. Handman: The Mexican Immigrant in Texas, p. 338.





some realize "that citizens or not they will still be Mexicans." Along the border it is so hard to be sure which are native born and which are Mexican born in many cases that equal rights are given to all. Those who do become citizens are very proud of it and they all rejoice in the fact that the birth of children in the United States makes them Americans. The Mexican is willing to vote and fight for any country he lives in but he sees no possible reason for going to court unless he is taken there.

The recent reports of Mexican-Americans giving up their citizenship fail to ring true. Perhaps a few disillusioned youths have made such a gesture, but the youth of all nations have always made "heroic" gestures and the politicians have always seized upon those gestures as "positive signs." Personally, the only man I have ever known who seriously considered becoming a Mexican citizen was the son of an educated American father and a Mexican peon mother, a lad who was deeply embittered by his inheritance of an English name, an Anglo-Saxon temperament, a dark skin and a slight Spanish accent.

The first generation is slowly becoming less dazed, the second and third generations are adopting American ways. While the foreign born American is slow to become naturalized, his children are proud of their American birth, stay in school longer and find a higher type of employment. "It is interesting



to note that third generation Mexicans are growing up in the United States, and that whereas the first generation speak English with difficulty, if at all, the second generation are handicapped for the first five grades the third generation are refusing to speak Spanish. This tendency is due partly to the fact that the third generation do not know Spanish very well."<sup>1</sup>

Even with his culture changing the Mexican presents a problem socially in that he is neither white nor black in the sense the terms are generally used. In Texas there is a definite place for the 3,500,000 "whites", another for the 800,000 Negroes, but the 1,350,000 Mexicans,<sup>2</sup> many of them American born, come somewhere in between. The Negroes by law have separate schools, theatres and eating places, the lower class Mexicans are isolated by custom and living conditions but they may be admitted to white places of amusement and in the higher grades the children enter mixed schools. The Mexican may sit where he pleases in the street car, the Negro may not. Yet the Negro considers himself superior to the Mexican and the Mexican looks down upon the Negro. The "white man" sees both races as his inferiors, while recognizing the value of the upper class Mexican and the individual Negro. All three races disapprove

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1. Bogardus: The Second Generation Mexican, p. 283.

2. Lescohier: The Vital Problem in Mexican Immigration, p. 548.





of interracial marriages and tend to keep to themselves socially.

There is a good deal of ill will between the American and the Mexican, part of which is due to international difficulties, part of it to labor propaganda and economic competition and a great deal due to ignorance.

The extremelabor view as expressed by some of their leaders, "The worst curse on American labor today is the influx of Mexican labor... . Low wages, long hours, low standards of living on the part of Mexicans means 'the Mexicans are wresting the southwest from Americans!'.<sup>1</sup>"

Such views have led to the efforts now being made to restrict Mexican immigration. The suggestion to restrict Mexican immigration has raised much discussion as seen in the arguments for and against the Box bill which would have cut the number of Mexicans entering this country to about 1,500 a year.

There seems to be little doubt that restriction for a period would help the Mexican himself by allowing adjustments which are impossible with the present inflow, but there are several stumbling blocks in the path of restriction. Our relations with Mexico are none too good as it is and any law to discriminate against the Mexican alone would be an affront to Mexico. There is some basis for the demand for cheap labor in the newer parts of the country. The physical difficulties of the border would make enforcement next to impossible and

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1. Bogardus: Mexican Immigrants and the Quota, p. 372.



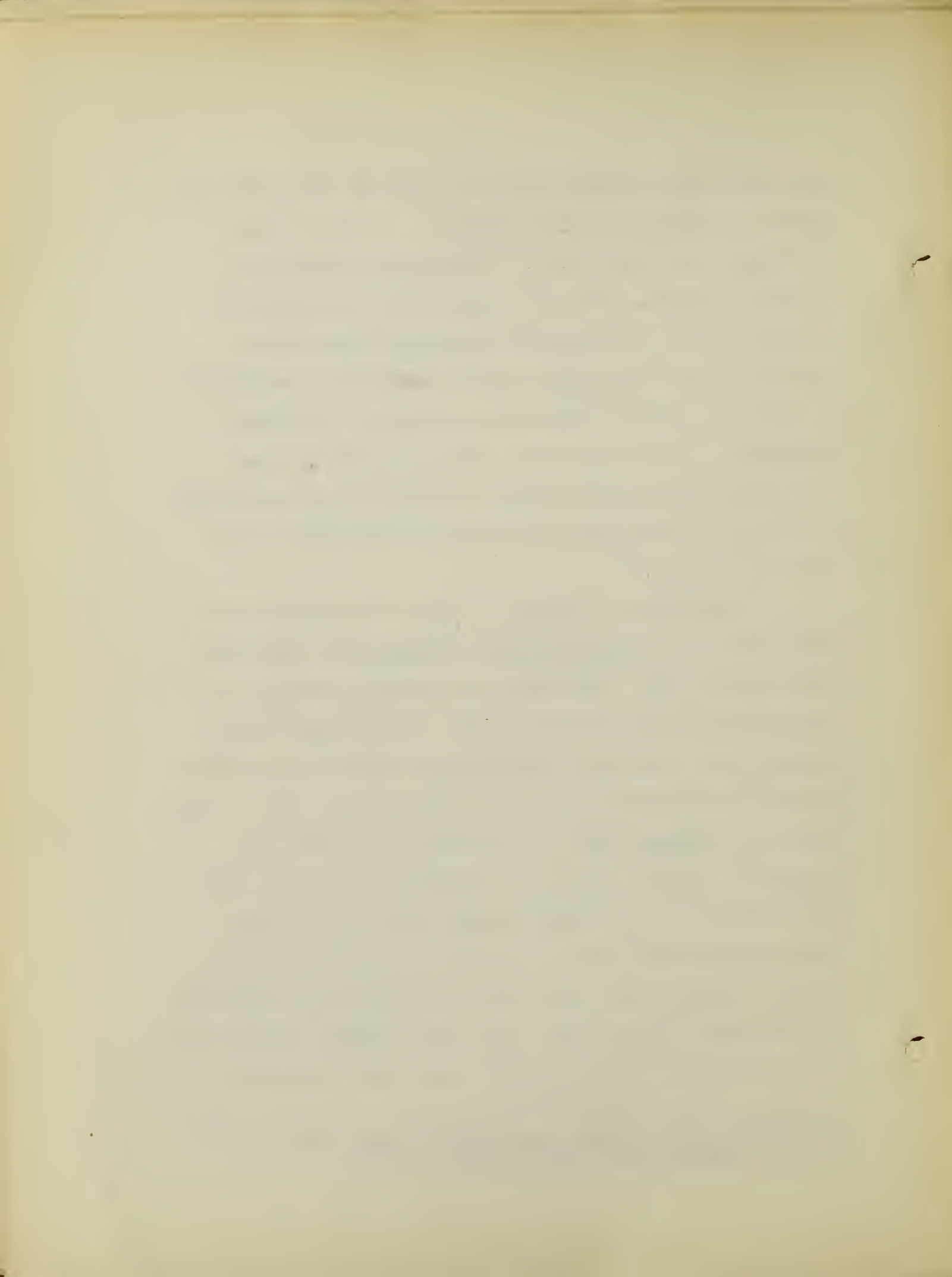
we should run the risk of passing a law we were unable to enforce, thereby becoming ridiculous. As the Mexican government and the C. R. O. M. are doing their utmost to limit emigration "it is proposed that the question be taken up by the governments concerned and that an impartial and broad minded joint commission be appointed to study the whole problem and to work out a solution acceptable to both countries. This proposal is sound in theory, but involves serious obstacles that constitute a challenge to American and Mexican intelligence, good will and courage."<sup>1</sup>

Regardless of whether a quota is imposed or not Americans face a grave problem in dealing with the Mexicans already here. Culturally the peoples are far apart, "The Mexican enjoys savoring life, the American enjoys crowding it. One would imagine that it would be possible for the two cultural ideals to exist placidly side by side, each race following its own conception of worthwhile living."<sup>2</sup> Perhaps they can. Certainly most people who know Mexicans as individuals admire and respect them; they are "greasers" only to people who consider them as a mass. Because they know little of Mexico and understand her less some persons have, thru much talking, started both Americans and Mexicans upon the wrong trail in relation to

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1. Bogardus: The Mexican Immigrant and the Quota, p. 373.  
 2. Frank: Mexicans Just Won't Work, p. 155.





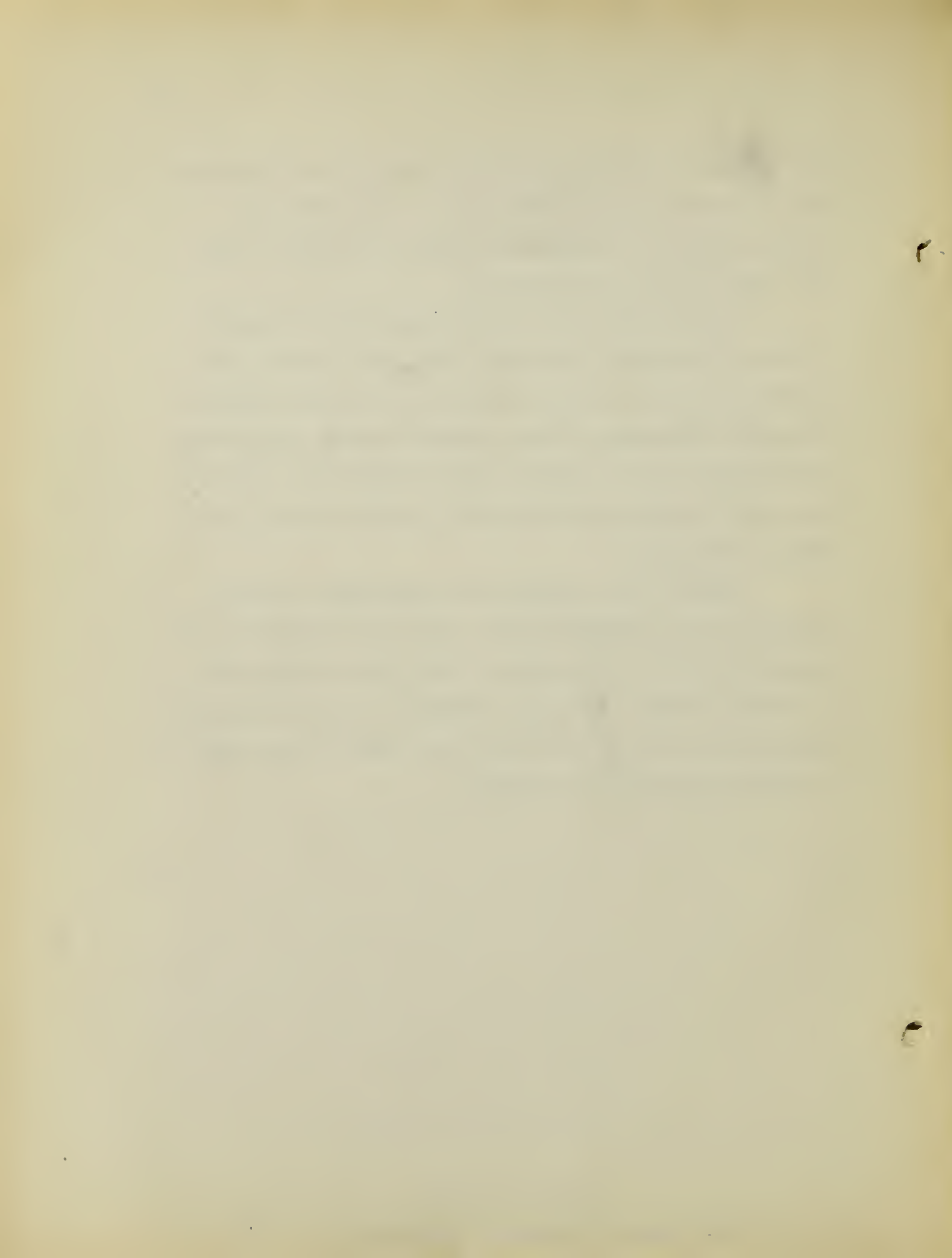
each other. As Ernestine Alvarado says: "You could hardly become friends with one who begins by insulting your mother, and for us Mexicans love for our country is not less than love for our mothers."<sup>1</sup>

To the Mexican all Americans are seen in terms of the ones he knows personally which puts a heavy responsibility upon teachers, employers and welfare workers. The early experiences of the immigrant decide his feeling for the people of his adopted land, whether they shall be loved and respected or whether they shall be held in contempt as "gringos".

Somehow, thru sympathy and education, a common ground must be established where each race respecting and learning from the good points of the other can work for the United States. We cannot continue a nation of greasers and gringos; to do so is to court the strife which comes to a "house divided against itself."

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1. Alvarado: Mexican Immigration to the U. S., p. 480



THE MEXICAN IMMIGRANT, A PRODUCT OF HIS BACKGROUND

The Comprehensive Summary





## THE MEXICAN IMMIGRANT, A PRODUCT OF HIS BACKGROUND

### Summary

Chapter I. Since the quota law has cut down the number of immigrants entering the United States from Europe interest and discussion have turned to the Mexicans who without quota limitation enter the United States at the rate of thousands yearly. These immigrants belong to two groups reflecting the two great social classes of Mexico. The upper class come for business reasons, to educate their children, as political refugees and since 1926 as members of exiled religious orders. They adapt themselves easily to the ways of the United States and take their place in the community life. These are most desirable persons, as a rule, and the number is so small there is no problem here.

The bulk of the immigrants, however, come from the lower or peon class, they enter the country in large numbers, often illegally. In the Southwest, a land which until a short time ago belonged to the Spanish-Mexican race, they have become extremely numerous and the value of their presence is a matter of serious debate. The peon



has made up 90% of the population of Mexico, but he has seldom felt the full responsibility for his future or the future of his family. In the United States he expects to find wealth and great opportunity but instead he finds keen competition for the necessities of life. He has as his background the land of poco tiempo and finds our rushing civilization most confusing.

Chapter II. The first thing the new comer must do is find work and a place to live. Those who go into the country as farm hands usually find fair lodgings on the place while the outdoor work coupled with the fact that the farm provides food even when wages are spent makes his lot a happy one. But the Mexican who stays in town settles in the Mexican section which is never the better section, he lives in a tenement house under crowded and often unsanitary conditions. He furnishes his house like the one he left in Mexico, which is almost not at all and here the peon family starts life in the United States.

Personally, the Mexican has a high code of honor and if kindly and considerately treated he may be relied upon. Although unskilled he is a good worker when not pushed, while the Mexican woman makes a most trustworthy and faithful servant. As the Mexican's wages are uniformly low and he seems to see no advantage in saving he is likely to become a charge of the community in illness or old age.





This possibility together with the fact that he sends his children to the public schools while paying few taxes, has led to criticism and ill feeling on the part of short-sighted Americans.

The Mexican has had experience in politics but he is poorly equipped to fit into the American system or to judge of issues or candidates so he often constitutes a controlled or bought vote. His idea of politics is mixed with an idea of revolution and perhaps has something to do with the slight value he puts upon human life. He accepts life and death passively, even the early death of his children. This attitude of resignation forms a stumbling block in the pathway of health and sanitation work.

To the first generation the church plays a very important part; it satisfies the longing for beauty, color and music so keen in the average Mexican. They are deeply devout, these Mexicans, and their religion is a vital part of everyday life. The saints are personal friends, waiting and willing to give help when needed. Parts of the church service, also remind the immigrant of Mexico, and the first generation remembers Mexico with yearning. They think of the national music, the stories of the Aztec empire, the miracles wrought by the Lady of Guadalupe, the exploits of Hidalgo and Juarez on behalf of the Republic. These traditions and the memory of the great physical beauty



of parts of Mexico hold the immigrant to his native land even while he is adjusting himself to the United States.

Chapter III. The second generation are much closer to American standards than their parents were. They may still live in a tenement, but there is furniture and a victrola. Their clothes are American clothes, the girls even wearing hats instead of shawls, and they have adopted the ways of the American children with whom they go to school. Most of the second generation finish the grade schools, some finish high school, but only a few brave souls go to college. The additional education, their knowledge of English and their higher standard of living put these American born Mexicans in better positions than their immigrant parents held. Their wages are still low but they come into conflict with American labor which violently resents their presence. All of these forces complicate the lives of the Mexicans, they are more sophisticated than they were in Mexico and they are no longer content with the old interests. Their amusements are more exciting; the churches make their chief appeal through socialized activities; they are interested in sports. Perhaps they do not show a great enthusiasm for the surface of American ways, such as becoming citizens, but they do delight in better living, better schools,





more reading and better health. After all these are the things that count . If the American born Mexican can combine the best of his Mexican heritage with the sound practices of the United States, ignoring the faults of both nations, we shall have in him a wonderful addition to the country.



THE MEXICAN IMMIGRANT, A PRODUCT OF HIS BACKGROUND

The Bibliography





In addition to the readings listed I have drawn freely upon my own experience in dealing with the Mexican in this country and in Mexico. This experience was gained through a lifetime spent in El Paso, Texas, a city more than 50% Mexican and just across the sometimes dusty Rio Grande from Cuidad Juarez, famed as a lucky starting point for revolutions. In Mexico itself I have travelled leisurely and visited Americans resident in the Republic. The last time I was south of Juarez was in 1928 when I spent three months in the interior, chiefly in the small non-tourist towns and in Mexico City where I attended the National University.

I do not claim that a few months in Mexico is a basis for judging the Mexican, but those months together with over twenty-five years of living side by side with him in the Southwest do give one ideas and opinions upon the Mexican race and these I have used from time to time in this thesis.



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